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THE

THEATRE

OF

EDUCATION.

ERRATA.

VOL. II.

Page 16 l. 5 Remain near, *dele* comma.
— 82 l. 21 I ſee, Dorinda *dele* comma.
— 85 l. 26 *for* except, *read* expect.
— 88 l. 1 — ſombody, *read* ſomebody.
— 95 l. 18 — deſigning, *read* deigning.
— 127 l. 12 *after* word, *add* one.
— 134 l. 1 *after* that, *add* is.
— 142 l. 18 *for Madam, read Madame.*
— 214 l. 15 — overſhot my mark, *read* exceeded myſelf.
— 229 l. 34 — your, *read* you.
— 246 l. 6 — litied, *read* pitied.

THE THEATRE OF EDUCATION.

A NEW TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH OF MADAME LA MARQUISE DE SILLERY, LATE MADAME LA COMTESSE DE GENLIS.

VOL. II.

Leçon commence, exemple achève.
La Motte, Fable de l'Aigle et de l'Aiglon.

LONDON:
Printed for J. WALTER, at CHARING CROSS.
MDCCLXXXVII.

NEW-YORK.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ſtory of the following little piece is drawn from real life. But three years ſince, the excellent Mrs. Aglebert reſided at Spa; and her hiſtory was collected from the poor blind woman herſelf. Indeed, throughout this drama, every circumſtance reſpecting Mrs. Aglebert and her family is ſtrictly true; her very name is preſerved, as are the names of her children, their number, and the trade of her huſband. It is likewiſe true that an *Engliſh lady*, then at Spa, was a great benefactreſs to theſe reſpectable perſons.

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THE

BLIND WOMAN OF SPA;

A DRAMA,

OF ONE ACT.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

MRS. AGLEBERT, *a shoe-maker's wife.*

JANE, *her eldest daughter.*

MARY, LOUISON, } *sisters to Jane.*

MARGERY, *an old blind woman.*

Lady SEYMOUR.

FELICIA, *a French lady.*

Father ANTHONY, *a Capuchin friar.*

Scene, at the waters of Spa.

THE

BLIND WOMAN OF SPA.

Le conquérant eſt craint, le ſage eſt eſtimé,
Mais le bienfaiſant charme, & lui ſeul eſt aimé.

Voltaire.

Fear, waits the conqueror's terrific name,
Eſteem, the ſage, who toils for letter'd fame,
But charity, bleſs'd hand-maid from above!
Alone can charm us and command our love.

SCENE the Firſt.

The Stage repreſents a publick walk.

MRS. AGLEBERT, JANE.

MRS. AGLEBERT, *carrying a bundle.*

LET us ſtop a moment; 'tis ſuch fine weather!

Jane. We are within a ſtone's throw of our houſe; ſhall I carry home that troubleſome bundle of yours?

Mrs. Agle. No, no; it is too heavy:—it contains our provision for to-morrow and Sunday.

Jane. And that, is only potatoes!

Mrs. Agle. Well, Jane, what then?

Jane. For these last eighteen months, we have had nothing to eat but potatoes.

Mrs. Agle. My love, when one is poor—

Jane. So, you were not poor eighteen months ago? for then, we made such nice bread, pies, and cakes—

Mrs. Agle. Ah, if you knew my reasons, Jane!—but you are too young to comprehend them.

Jane. Too young! I'm going for fifteen.

Mrs. Agle. You have a good heart; and I will tell you all some time or other.

Jane. Do tell me now.

Mrs. Agle. Hush, I hear a noise; there are ladies —

Jane. Oh dear, mother!—

Mrs. Agle. Why, what's the matter?

Jane. 'Tis she; 'tis the lady, who gave my sisters and me our new cloaths.

Mrs. Agle. Have you been, this morning, to thank her for them?

Jane. Yes, mother.

Mrs. Agle. Well then, let us move homewards; for Margery, our poor blind ward, has not had a walk all day, and is now expecting you, I don't doubt. Come, you shall take her to the friar's garden, where I will join you, as soon as I have done work. Come along.

Jane. I'll follow you, mother.

(*Mrs. Aglebert goes away; Jane lingers behind: lady Seymour and Felicia pass by, without observing her.*)

Jane.

Jane. (*looks at Felicia, and ſays.*) She did not ſee me; I am ſorry, for I love her very much. (*She runs away, to overtake her mother.*)

SCENE II.

LADY SEYMOUR, FELICIA.

Lady Sey. IT is impoſſible to move here, without meeting ſome perſon in diſtreſs. This wrings the very heart!

Fel. You have ſo much ſenſibility—beſides, I believe the Engliſh ladies, in general, to be far more compaſſionate than we are; they have leſs capriciouſneſs, leſs coquetry; and coquetry blaſts and extirpates almoſt every virtue.

Lady Sey. What you ſay, reminds me of a ſcene by which I was ſtruck this morning. You know the Viſcounteſs de Roſelle?

Fel. A little.

Lady Sey. I ſaw her, about two hours ſince, in the ſquare, where ſhe was accoſted by a poor old cripple, who begged alms, telling her he had a family dying through poverty and hunger. The Viſcounteſs, melted by his tale, drew out her purſe, and was in the act of beſtowing it upon him, when, unfortunately, a tradeſman approached with caps and feathers: he opened his band-box, and the Viſcounteſs, no longer awake to pity, heard the old man's complaints with coldneſs and inattention: however, to rid herſelf of his importunities, ſhe threw him a mere trifle, and then purchaſed the whole contents of the band-box.

Fel. But your ladyſhip made amends to the poor man, I can anſwer for it.

Lady Se. Hear the conclusion. The cripple, picked up her scanty gift, and retired, exclaiming—"Now, my wife and chidren will not starve to-day!"—This short sentence roused the natural goodness and humanity of the Viscountess's disposition: she called him back, and after pausing a moment, offered the tradesman an advanced price on all his things, provided he would allow her credit for them. The proposition was accepted, and the purse bestowed on the poor beggar, who, from surprize and joy, nearly expired at his benefactress's feet.—Being seated under an elm, and concealed by its foliage, I enjoyed the uninterrupted contemplation of this interesting scene, which supplied me with matter for a variety of reflexions.

Fel. As a lover of reflexion, you should take a trip to Paris: there, we shall furnish you with abundance of other matter; there, for instance, you will perceive that we pique ourselves on imitating the English, in every point but one, namely, beneficence. We exaggerate all your fashions, acquire your habits, ape your manners; but we have not yet adopted that generous custom, universally established among you, the raising contributions to encourage genius, or assist the unfortunate.

Lady Se. Then, you rather counterfeit, than imitate the English: for, by disregarding that which makes us truly estimable, and at the same time exaggerating our habits and our fashions, you turn us into ridicule.

Fel. Time, I hope, will enable you to impart the virtues, as you have already taught us the manners of England. But, in order to continue this discourse more at our ease, will your ladyship

go

go with me upon the mountain? there, we ſhall find ſhade.

Lady Se. I cannot accompany you now, as I am waiting for a perſon, whom I appointed to meet me here.

Fel. Will your converſation be a long one?

Lady Se. No; I have but a word to ſay. Oh, here comes the very man!

Fel. What, is it Father Anthony? I gueſs the cauſe of this meeting. You wiſh to be guided as to the direction of ſome charity; nor is there any one, more deſerving of your higheſt confidence in that reſpect, than venerable Father Anthony.—Adieu!—I'll wait for your ladyſhip on the mountain.

Lady Se. Whereabouts ſhall I find you?

Fel. In the little temple.

Lady Se. I'll be there, in a quarter of an hour.

[*Felicia goes away.*

SCENE III.

LADY SEYMOUR, FATHER ANTHONY.

Lady Se. THIS poor Father Anthony, what difficulty he finds in walking! 'Tis pity, that with a heart ſo excellent, he ſhould know old age.—Good-day, Father Anthony. I have been waiting for you this hour.

Fa. An. (*Holding a noſegay in his hand.*) I was unwilling to come, without bringing your ladyſhip a little noſegay; and I had not a ſingle roſe myſelf; however, at laſt one of our brothers gave

me two—but these carnations grew in my own garden.

Lady Se. And beautiful flowers they are!

Fa. An. Oh, I defy any body to produce better; for, without boasting, I have the finest carnations!—Why, your ladyship has never been to see my garden since there were carnations in it.

Lady Se. I will certainly go. But, to speak truth, there always are such groups of people in your publick garden; and I am so fond of solitude!—Well, now, for our business, Father Anthony.—Have you found me a very necessitous, worthy family?

Fa. An. I have found—Ah, my lady, I have found a treasure! A wife, husband, and five children, in such indigence!

Lady Se. What is the husband?

Fa. An. A shoe-maker: his wife takes in plain-work, and is a woman of such piety, such virtue!—she is the daughter of a schoolmaster; she can read, write, and has received a good education for her sphere of life.—Then, if you knew the charity of these people, and the meritorious act they have done! Indeed, madam, they richly deserve your fifty guineas.

Lady Se. You rejoice me, father. Come, proceed.

Fa. An. Oh, 'tis a long story. In the first place, the husband's name is Aglebert. But will you go to their house? for you must see, before you believe.

Lady Se. Well, return hither in a couple of hours; and we will then go together, and visit these good people; but, in the mean time, tell me their story briefly.

Fa.

Fa. An. Briefly!—why, the mere preamble would take up more than three quarters of an hour: besides, I never could relate any thing briefly.

Lady Se. So I perceive. Well, father, adieu, till evening; for I hear people coming this way, therefore we should be interrupted now.

Fa. An. And I have some little matters to settle; but at seven o'clock I will be here.

Lady Se. You will find me. Adieu! Father Anthony.

Fa. An. (*Going a little way, and then returning.*) My lady, you'll not forget to come and see my carnations?

Lady Se. I promise, and you may depend upon me, father.

Fa. An. Oh, they are the worthiest creatures!—

Lady Se. What, your carnations?

Fa. An. No; I spoke of those good Agleberts. 'Tis an angelick family! (*He goes a few paces, and then comes back again, saying with a confident air*) I have got one, streaked with red and white, which is not to be equalled in all Spa.

Lady Se. I shall certainly pay it a visit tomorrow.

Fa. An. Your servant, madam.—What good you will do this evening! [*He goes away.*

Lady Se. The Agleberts, and the carnations, make a strange confusion in his brain. Thus, all his happiness, all his amusement, consists in relieving indigence and cultivating flowers; but simplicity of taste seldom fails to accompany great virtues. However, I must go and join Felicia—Hah!—what a pretty little girl!

SCENE IV.

LADY SEYMOUR, JANE, MARGERY, MARY.

(*Jane leads in Margery, and sits down with her upon a bench at the further end of the stage. Mary advances to look at lady Seymour.*)

Mary. NO, 'tis not her.

Lady Se. (*Looking at Mary.*) Lovely child!—Come hither, my little dear; what are you looking for?

Mary. (*Curtseying.*) Why—I mistook you for a lady, who is very good indeed, and very affable too; but I was wrong.

Lady Se. Yet, I may, perhaps, be as good as your lady.

Mary. (*Shaking her head.*) Oh, dear!

Lady Se. Then you don't credit that?

Mary. The lady gave me a gown.

Lady Se. Oh, this alters the case—is it the gown you have on?

Mary. Yes, madam; and then I have a fine cap besides, which I shall wear on Sunday: and my sister Jane, and my sister Louison, have got new gowns too.

Lady Se. And from the same good lady?

Mary. Yes, indeed.

Lady Se. What is her name?

Mary. I don't remember; I never saw her 'till this morning; but she is a French Lady, who lodges at *the Prince Eugene.*

Lady

Lady Se. Hah, then 'tis Felicia!—And are your ſiſters as pretty as you?

Mary. Look'ye, there's Jane, down there.

Lady Se. Which, that girl who ſits knitting?

Mary. Yes.

Lady Se. Who is that with her?

Mary. Margery, our blind woman.

Lady Se. What do you mean by your blind woman?

Mary. Why, our blind woman, as my mother calls her, whom we walk with, and lead about; though 'tis only for the laſt three months, that I have been ſuffered to lead her, 'cauſe I was too little before: and even now they w'ont let me take her into the ſtreets, for fear of difficulties.

Lady Se. She is a relation of yours, no doubt?

Mary. Yes, may be ſo; but I can't tell: however, my mother loves her like one of us; for ſhe ſometimes calls Margery her ſixth child.

Lady Se. It is perfectly right to take care of relations; eſpecially when they are infirm. And what is your name?

Mary. Mary, at your ſervice.

Lady Se. Well then, Mary, come and ſee me to-morrow morning. I live in that large new houſe on the * *Chauſée*; and bring your blind woman, for I wiſh to be acquainted with her.

Mary. Oh, Margery is a worthy creature!

Lady Se. Good-b'ye, Mary, 'till to-morrow.

[*She goes away.*

* A publick road from Spa to Aix la Chapelle. T.

SCENE

SCENE V.

MARY, JANE, MARGERY.

Mary. Why, that's another good lady.—I'd venture a wager ſhe'll have a gown made for Margery; ſhe loves blind folks, I ſee plain enough.—I'm very glad of it. Come, now I ſhall keep my fine apron myſelf, elſe Margery ſhould have had it.—Ah, here they come.—They want to know what the lady has been ſaying to me.

Jane. Do tell us, Mary, who is that fine lady you have been ſpeaking to?

Mary. Is not ſhe a fine lady? ſhe lives on the *Clauſée*; I ſhall go to-morrow, and take Margery to ſee her.

Jane. Not by yourſelf; there are too many ſtreets in the way.

Mary. Oh, yes, by myſelf, all through the ſtreets. The fine lady ſaid I was quite big enough for that; and ſhe knows very well, I ſhould think.

Marg. Why, Mary, you have not ſtrength to ſupport me.

Mary. Oh, to be ſure!—No, no; you love Jane beſt, that's the thing, and it a'nt fair.

Marg. Alas, my dears, I love you juſt alike; you are ſo charitable!

Jane. Well then, Mary, I'll only take care of Margery through the ſtreets; and not go in, at the lady's houſe.

Mary. No, no; you muſt come in with us: don't vex yourſelf now; but Margery ſhall ſometimes

times lean upon me as we go along; let her promise that, and I'll be contented.

Marg. Yes, Mary; yes, my love; I do promise. Poor children, God will surely bless you!

Mary. Oh, now I think of it, pray Margery, are you any relation of ours?—the lady asked me, and I could not tell what answer to make.

Marg. Alas, I am nothing to you, and yet I owe you every thing!—but heaven will reward the whole family.

Mary. And what do you owe to us, Margery? Can you think we find any trouble in taking care of you, when we do it with so good a will?—How I long to be quite grown up, that I may dress you, wait upon you, and lead you about like my mother and Jane!—

Jane. (*In a whisper to Mary.*) Hold your tongue; you vex her. I do believe she cries.

Mary. (*Going on the other side of Margery, and taking her by the hand.*) Margery, dear Margery, did I say any thing wrong? are you vexed?

Marg. Quite otherwise, my sweet girls; the goodness of your hearts makes me forget every calamity.

Mary. Then how happy we are! But I hear my mother's voice.—Oh, she is coming along with Louison.

SCENE VI.

MARY, JANE, MARGERY, MRS. AGLEBERT, LOUISON.

Mrs. Agle. THERE they are.—Jane, we were looking for you; come, it's time to get home.

Jane. Oh, do let us stay and work here for another half hour, mother.

Mrs.

Mrs. Agle. Well then, be it ſo. Go, Mary, fetch my ſpinning-wheel; and bring ſome work for yourſelf, likewiſe. [*Mary goes away.*

Lou. And what ſhall I do, mother?

Mrs. Agle. Remain near, Margery, leſt ſhe ſhould want any thing, that you may wait upon her. You muſt learn to be uſeful, as well as your ſiſters. Come, let us ſit down. (*She draws a bench, and ſits down upon it, taking Margery by the hand, whom ſhe places between herſelf and Jane.*)

Lou. (*To Jane.*) Siſter, give me your place; I muſt come there, to wait upon Margery.

Mrs. Agle. Sit down by her on the ground.

Lou. Aye, with all my heart. (*She kneels down by Margery.*)

Jane. Oh, here is your ſpinning-wheel, mother. (*Mary enters with the ſpinning-wheel, and brings it to Mrs. Aglebert, who begins ſpinning. Jane knits, and Mary ſits down by her mother, on a large ſtone ſtanding in a corner near the bench, and hems a handkerchief; while Louiſon takes ſome violets from the pocket of her apron, and makes a noſegay.*)

Mrs. Agle. (*After a ſhort ſilence.*) Mary, is your father come home?

Mary. No, mother.

Jane. Is not he gone to the capuchin convent?

Mrs. Agle. Yes, to ſpeak with father Anthony.

Mary. What fine carnations father Anthony has!

Lou. (*In tears.*) Ah, Margery! you have flung down all my violets in turning yourſelf about.

Marg. Excuſe me, my dear—I could not ſee them.

Lou. (*Still weeping.*) Oh, my poor violets!

Mrs. Agle. What's all this, little girl?

Lou.

Lou. Why, ſhe has flung down my violets.—She may e'en pick them up again herſelf, and that beſides. (*In a pet, ſhe throws down the reſt of the noſegay ſhe was making.*)

Jane. For ſhame, Louiſon!

Mrs. Agle. Louiſon, come hither. (*Louiſon gets up, and Mrs. Aglebert takes her into her lap.*) And ſo you are angry with Margery?

Lou. To be ſure; ſhe has flung down my violets.

Mrs. Agle. We'll talk about that preſently; but, in the firſt place, do you take my ſpinning-wheel and carry it home.

Lou. Yes, willingly, mother.—Oh, dear! it's too heavy; I can't even lift it up.

Mrs. Agle. Well, Louiſon, now I don't love you, becauſe you can't carry my ſpinning-wheel.

Lou. (*Weeping.*) But I have not ſtrength; is that my fault?

Mrs. Agle. Then you think it wrong in me, to be angry with you?

Lou. Yes, indeed; for you muſt know I am too little to carry ſuch a naſty great ſpinning-wheel.

Mrs. Agle. True, I did know it: and, pray, don't you know that Margery is blind? Could ſhe ſee your flowers? or could ſhe help you to pick them up?

Lou. Well, it was naughty in me to cry, and be angry with her.

Mrs. Agle. Poor creature! Is not ſhe ſufficiently unhappy in being blind, blind from her cradle?

Marg. (*Taking Mrs. Aglebert by the hand.*) No, Mrs. Aglebert, I am not unhappy—no, your goodneſs, your charity—

Mrs. Agle. Don't mention that, my dear—and obſerve

obſerve me, Louiſon; if you were not to conſider Margery as a ſiſter, I ſhould ceaſe to conſider you as a child.

Lou. I love Margery dearly; ſtill though, ſhe is no ſiſter of mine.

Mrs. Agle. Providence threw this deſtitute poor creature into my hands; and what was that but ſaying; "Look upon her as a ſixth child, given you by me."

Jane. Oh, 'twas juſt the ſame.

Mary. I comprehend that too.

Mrs. Agle. So will Louiſon, by and by; for the heart muſt neceſſarily improve with the underſtanding: and I repeat to you, my dear children, (nor let the precept be forgotten) that no one, without a worthy heart, can ever taſte contentment. Your father and I, have both worked very hard, both encountered many difficulties; ſtill, however, by a faithful diſcharge of our duty, life glides ſmoothly on: beſides, the conſcious joy, which ſprings from one good deed, makes up for ten whole years of toil and vexation.

Mary. Mother, I think, I hear ſome ladies walking this way.

Mrs. Agle. Well, let us go home.

Jane. Mother! mother! 'tis the French lady.

Mrs. Agle. No matter, come along: but ſet the bench in its right place. [*They all riſe.*

SCENE

SCENE VII.

MARY, JANE, MARGERY, LOUISON, MRS. AGLEBERT, LADY SEYMOUR, FELICIA.

Lady Se. FATHER Anthony is not yet come.—Hah! there are the very girls, of whom we were just now speaking.

Fel. (*To Jane.*) Is that your mother?

Mrs. Agle. (*Curtseying.*) Yes, madam; and I intended to wait upon you to-morrow, madam, and thank you for your goodness to my children. I have been so busy both yesterday and to-day—

Fel. That blind woman is your relation, to be sure?

Mrs. Agle. No, madam.

Marg. No; but 'tis just the same as if I were.

Mrs. Agle. Jane, take up my spinning-wheel—let us retire, lest we intrude upon these ladies.

Lady Se. Pray do not go yet—I have something more to ask you. (*In a low voice to Felicia.*) She seems afraid of our inquiries respecting this blind woman. Surely that is odd.

Fel. (*In a low voice to Lady Seymour.*) The remark occurred to me. (*Aloud to Mrs. Aglebert.*) What is your station, your business?

Mrs. Agle. I spin, and take in plain-work.

Lady Se. And do you earn enough to support your family?

Mrs. Agle. Yes, my lady; we have wherewithal to live.

Feli. Nevertheless, that day when I met your daughters on the mountain of Annette and Lubin, I was

I was equally ſtruck by the poverty, viſible in their dreſs, and the beauty which ſhone through it. Nay, even you, do not ſeem in a much better condition.

Mrs. Agle. True, we are not rich, but we are contented.

Lady Se. (*To Felicia.*) Does not ſhe intereſt you?

Fel. Beyond expreſſion.—(*To Mrs. Aglebert.*) Thoſe are three charming little girls of yours.—(*The children curtſey.*) Have you more children?

Mrs. Agle. Two boys, thank God!

Marg. And I, who hang entirely upon her.—

Mrs. Agle. Oh, Margery!—

Lady Se. How?

Marg. I owe every thing to theſe worthy people: this family of angels lodge, feed, clothe, and wait upon me, an infirm poor creature, often ailing, always uſeleſs. In them I find father, mother, brothers, ſiſters, ſervants; for they all are equally deſirous of doing good; all equally excellent, equally charitable. Yes, ladies, they are angels, poſitively angels, whom you ſee before you.

Fel. And is it poſſible? Oh, heaven!

Lady Se. This ſurprizing, this affecting ſtory, ſtrikes me motionleſs.

Mrs. Agle. Why ſo? for what we did is perfectly natural.—That good woman was quite deſtitute; we were able to conſole, able to relieve her; could we then abandon the poor creature?

Mary. (*In a low voice to Jane.*) But what makes the ladies ſo much vexed about it?—only look how they cry.

Jane. Aye, becauſe they are ſurprized; nevertheleſs, 'tis without reaſon.

Fel.

Fel. Do indulge us with every circumſtance of a tale ſo melting!

Lady Se. (*To Mrs. Aglebert.*) How did this poor woman fall into your hands?

Marg. We happened to lodge in the ſame houſe, when an old aunt of mine, who took care of me, died; and as I ſubſiſted wholly on the little earned by her, I loſt with her, all means of ſupport. Sickneſs attacked me; upon which, I was viſited by this dear, good ſoul, who began by ſitting up with me, then, called in a phyſician, paid him, cooked my broth herſelf; in ſhort, became my nurſe: and no ſooner did I get about again, than ſhe aſked me to live with her, which, for the laſt two years, I have done, and been treated as her eldeſt daughter.

Fel. (*Embracing Mrs. Aglebert.*) Oh, incomparable woman! with a ſoul like yours, in what a ſtate has fortune placed you!

Lady Se. I muſt embrace her too.

Mrs. Agle. Ladies!—you quite confound me.

Lady Se. (*To Mrs. Aglebert.*) Tell us your name; let us know that reſpectable name, which can never be effaced from our remembrance.

Mrs. Agle. My name is Catherine Aglebert.

Lady Se. Aglebert!—the very perſon mentioned to me, by Father Anthony.—Do you know Father Anthony?

Mrs. Agle. Yes, madam; he was at our houſe in the morning; and this afternoon has ſent for my huſband; but I can't tell what he wants with him.

Marg. I met Father Anthony yeſterday, in the Capuchin's garden; he queſtioned me, and I told him my ſtory.

Fel. But why is not that ſtory publiſhed throughout

out Spa? How could so much beneficence, so many virtues, till now remain unknown?

Marg. Because Mr. and Mrs. Aglebert have never made a talk about them; added to which, I am frequently ill, and of course obliged to keep house part of the year: besides, when I do go out, Jane (who is my guide) generally takes me to the most retired walks, by her mother's direction; and, if she sees people coming, she leads me a different way. It is only when she has a great deal of work upon her hands that I am taken to the Capuchin's garden, which is near our house; nor have I been there above three, or four times.

Lady Se. (*To Felicia.*) Here is virtue in her brightest lustre! and we enjoy the unspeakable happiness of discovering and contemplating her charms in all their purity! Simple, natural, exalted, devoid of vanity, or ostentation, she finds within herself alone, her glory and her recompense!

Fel. Ah, who can see her thus, and not adore her? Who can view this woman, nor feel a delightful impulse of respect and admiration?

Lady Se. Think of this uniform concurrence in opinion, this common fervour to do good, extending itself throughout a whole family! And that poor blind creature, that interesting, virtuous object of so much kindness, how aptly she describes her gratitude! how deeply she seems penetrated by those feelings which become her situation!—Not one touch remains to complete the beauty of this captivating picture.

Mary. Oh, mother! here comes Father Anthony, I do believe.

Lou. I'm very glad of it, for he always gives me some violets.

Lady

Lady Se. Stay, Mrs. Aglebert; and presently, you shall conduct us to your home.

Mrs. Agle. Madam—

SCENE VIII. and last.

MARY, JANE, MARGERY, LOUISON, MRS. AGLEBERT, LADY SEYMOUR, FELICIA, FATHER ANTHONY.

Lady Se. COME, Father Anthony, come; I believe I have discovered the very treasure which you mentioned to me.

Fa. An. Aye indeed; there she is—'tis Mrs. Aglebert. Well, madam, has your ladyship heard her story?

Lady Se. Yes, the whole.

Fa. An. (*To Mrs. Aglebert.*) Now then, Mrs. Aglebert, know, and thank your benefactress. Lady Seymour wished to bestow fifty guineas upon the worthiest family in Spa; and she has selected yours.

Marg. (*Raising her hands towards heaven.*) Kind heaven!

Mrs. Agle. Fifty guineas!—no, my lady, it is too much; no, there are many families in Spa, equally good, and more distressed than we are. My neighbour, Marianne Sauvard, is so deserving, and so miserably poor!—

Lady Se. Well, of her, I likewise promise to take care.—Father Anthony will give you fifty guineas this evening; and I add an hundred more as a portion for Jane.

Mrs. Agle. Oh, madam! it is too much—too much indeed.—

Marg. Ah, is it possible?—Where is this worthiest of ladies, that I may embrace her knees?—Jane, where is she? (*Jane leads her up to lady Seymour.*)

Fel. Poor woman, how affecting is her behaviour!—And you, lady Seymour, how happy must you be!

Marg. (*Taking hold on lady Seymour's gown.*) Is this her?

Lady Se. (*Giving her hand to Margery.*) Yes, my good woman.

Marg. (*Throwing herself at Lady Seymour's feet.*) Oh, madam, I shall bless you all the days of my life! You make the fortune of this respectable family; but for me, you do still more; to you I owe their felicity; and the only joy poor Margery can experience upon earth, is that of knowing these worthy people to be happy in proportion to their merit. Now my sole desire is gratified, and I shall die contented.

Lady Se. (*Raising and embracing her.*) Oh, I conceive your joy, and share it with transport!

Mrs. Agle. We all shall pray for you, so long as we have life, my lady.

Jane. Aye, that we shall.

Mary. And most sincerely.

Lou. So shall I too.

Lady Se. Then, implore the Deity to grant me the continuance of a feeling heart; for through your means I learn to value that, as the most precious gift his bounty can bestow.

Fa. An. In coming here, my lady, I passed by *Vaux-hall*, where groups assemble, some to dance, others to engage at play; but, I'll answer for it, no person there, can boast a joy like that you just have tasted.

Fel. And if ſtrangers to ſuch joy, how much are they to be pitied!

Lady Se. Come, let us attend Mrs. Aglebert home, for I really long to ſee her huſband.

Mrs. Agle. Oh, madam, how good you are!—But we lodge ſo high up—

Lady Se. No matter, ſhew us the way. With what delight ſhall I go into that narrow habitation which contains ſo many virtues!

Mrs. Agle. Good Father Anthony, ſpeak for us.—I am ſo much ſurprized and overcome, that I know not how to expreſs myſelf.

Fa. An. Well, never mind; for Lady Seymour's heart is capable of penetrating yours.—But you muſt aſk her ladyſhip to grant me a favour, Mrs. Aglebert, by going to viſit my garden after ſhe leaves your houſe.

Lady Se. That is but right, and I promiſe to do it.

Fa. An. Indeed, your ladyſhip richly deſerves the fineſt carnation in the whole town; and—you ſhall have it this very evening.

Mrs. Agle. If I might preſume to offer theſe ladies my arm—

Lady Se. I accept it with pleaſure, my dear Mrs. Aglebert.

Mrs. Agle. Jane and Mary, do you take care of Margery.

Fel. Come, let us loſe no more time, but go and ſee the man, who merits ſuch a wife and children. (*Lady Seymour, Felicia, Mrs. Aglebert, and Father Anthony, go away. Margery, and the three girls, remain behind.*)

Marg. May heaven ſhower down its bleſſings on this worthy lady!

Mary. How affable ſhe is!

Lou. And how handſome!

Jane. Can any one ſo good be otherwiſe than handſome?—But they are gone; let us follow them.—Oh, my dear father! what delight ſhall I feel in ſeeing his joy!

THE

THE

DOVE;

A DRAMA,

OF ONE ACT.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

ROSINA.

AMELIA, *sister to Rosina.*

ZELIS, *friend to Rosina and Amelia.*

COLIN, *the gardener.*

The Scene, a Country-house.

THE

DOVE.

——— Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations ſtrong.
Shakeſpeare. T.

SCENE the Firſt.

The Stage repreſents a Garden.

ROSINA, AMELIA, COLIN.

(When the curtain riſes, Amelia is ſeen near a tree, holding a dove to her boſom. Roſina has a large baſket of flowers in her hand, and looks thoughtfully at her ſiſter; ſhe is leaning againſt an orange-tree, which Colin is watering.)

Roſina, after a ſhort ſilence.

SHE thinks of nothing but her dove!

Ame. Poor little dove! how it ſtays on my boſom! how tame and quiet it is! how I love it!

[*She kiſſes it.*

Roſ.

Ros. (*Shrugging up her shoulders.*) Very moving!

Ame. Colin, have you put corn and water into the aviary?

Colin. Yes, mademoiselle.

Ame. There, carry my dove thither; but take great care not to do it any harm.—Softly, you are going to hurt it—there, very well; gently, in this manner. Stay, Colin, that I may bid it adieu. (*She kisses and strokes it again*). Charming little creature! Go, Colin. (*Colin goes away with the dove.*)

SCENE II.

ROSINA, AMELIA.

Ros REALLY, sister, I wonder that a girl of your age can be so taken up with a bird!

Ame. For my part, I do not censure your taste for flowers; then why, Rosina, do you laugh at my dove?

Ros. What a difference! Flowers, to me, are merely an amusement; while your melancholy turtle-dove is, to you, the object of a very lively, a very tender affection.

Ame. Very lively!—very tender!—what nonsense!—But, after all, a gentle, grateful dove, is more engaging than a rose.

Ros. Therefore, I could, without difficulty, sacrifice to you all my roses, orange-trees, white lilach-trees, and even the charming myrtle I received from Zelis; but you, Amelia, could not resolve to give me your dove.

Ame. What mean these reproaches? How long, Rosina, have you doubted my friendship? has it ever varied?

Ros. I understand—

Ame. Well, I do not understand you.

Ros. Let us change the subject.—Zelis comes to-day.

Ame. After a six months absence, how happy shall I be to see her again!

Ros. Oh, I don't doubt it; for, if I must explain my meaning, you never loved any thing so well as Zelis.

Ame. *(Smiling.)* Do you think so, sister?

Ros. Yes, not even your dove.

Ame. I remember, you formerly had the injustice to imagine, that I could prefer Zelis to you; but, since her departure, you have appeared to be entirely cured of that prejudice. So, when you affirmed it, you deceived me, sister?

Ros. I can never deceive you, Amelia—but my love for you often makes me uneasy, agitated, and out of humour with myself.—You are my true, my only friend; and I cannot bear that another should partake with me your confidence and affection.

Ame. You deserve both, and you are my sister; therefore, were Zelis possessed of all the qualifications which attach me to you, I should still love you better than her.

Ros. Because I am your sister! how cold this is!

Ame. But do you make no account of the charming bands which unite us; those sacred ties of blood, which make it our duty to love each other?

Ros. Then you only love me from duty?

Ame. No; but that duty renders my affection more tender.

Ros. Oh, how different are our feelings!—There is somebody coming.

Ame. Zelis, perhaps.

Ros. Really, I think I hear her voice.

Ame. (*Running away to meet Zelis.*) Ah, it is her indeed!

Ros. What joy!—what transports!—could she do more for me?—Well, I'll restrain myself. (*Amelia and Zelis return arm in arm.*)

SCENE III.

ROSINA, AMELIA, ZELIS.

Zel. WHERE is she?

Ame. There. (*Rosina advances a few steps; Zelis runs to her and embraces her.*)

Zel. Rosina, Amelia, how happy am I to be again with you!

Ros. Believe me, my heart shares in the happiness.

Ame. and Ros. We did not expect you till the evening.

Zel. Oh, we came without stopping. My mother was so impatient to see yours again; for she loves her, as we love one another. While they are together, let us chat freely; for, after such a long absence, one has so many things to say!

Ame. In the first place, you shall give us an account of your travels.

Zel. Oh, they will afford subject for more than one conversation.

Ros. How many leagues have you been?

Zel.

Zel. I have made a calculation in my journal.—I'll tell you, ſtay—it is forty leagues from hence to Paris. Forty leagues going, forty leagues returning, that makes eighty leagues.

Roſ. and Amelia together. Have you been eighty leagues?

Zel. Yes, indeed.

Roſ. That is prodigious!

Ame. Eighty leagues in ſix months! You muſt be amazingly fatigued?

Zel. No, not much.

Roſ. Come, tell us a little about Paris. What did you think of that?

Zel. Oh, I thought it very noiſy—ſuch a conſtant buſtle!—

Ame. Have you ſeen the Tuileries, the opera?

Zel. Yes; but I am not fond of the opera, it is too hot; and, beſides, 'tis like being in a priſon, one is ſo ſhut up: none but the young ladies, who ſing and dance, have good places.

Roſ. And the Tuileries—that is ſaid to be ſuch a fine walk!

Zel. No, not very fine. Long walks, quite ſtraight; a large baſon of dirty water; and then, not a flower to be ſeen. Think of my looking a whole day after violets, without finding a ſingle bunch!

Roſ. Oh, I would rather have our willow walk by the river's ſide.

Zel. And ſo would I too, I aſſure you.

Ame. Only obſerve what ſtories travellers tell, with all their fine deſcriptions of the Tuileries!

Zel. You may believe me, who ſpeak truth; the place we live in is a thouſand times better than Paris. Here the air is ſo pure, ſo perfumed—the country ſo flouriſhing, ſo cheerful!—I was melan-

choly at Paris; nothing but walls and houſes; no verdure in the month of June; if you knew how that damps the ſpirits!—

Roſ. I can eaſily conceive it.

Ame. Then, you will be very happy to ſee all our old walks again?

Zel. To-morrow I'll get up at day-break.—But where ſhall we go firſt?

Roſ. Into the meadow.

Zel. Oh, the meadow—how glad I ſhall be to jump about there!—I forgot to tell you—jumping is forbid in the Tuileries.

Ame. and Roſ. Indeed!

Zel. Yes, really forbid. There people muſt walk with a very ſolemn ſtep, in this manner.

[*She walks with ridiculous gravity.*

Roſ. Bleſs me! what a country!—I hope I ſhall never travel thither.

Zel. Oh, you'll diſcover a great deal more when I read you my journal! in that you will have an account of all my ſufferings!—

Ame. Hah!

Zel. Beginning from the day after my arrival at Paris.

Roſ. How ſo?

Zel. The firſt day, two of my teeth were drawn; the next, my hair was curled in two thouſand papers; the third, a pair of ſtays were tried on which ſuffocated me; and the eighth—Oh, that was real torment!

Ame. You quite alarm me!

Zel. The eighth, I was taken to a ball.

Roſ. How! nothing more than that? I had conceived a charming idea of a ball.

Zel. Bleſs me! what an errour you were in!—The preparation alone is enough to diſguſt one with it for life.—If you knew the ceremony of

dreſſing

dreſſing for a ball!—it is the moſt woeful, and at the ſame time, the moſt comical thing—

Roſ. Do tell us all about it.

Zel. For my part, I was delighted with the thought of going to a ball.—Alas, I knew not what it was! I had only heard of dances and collations. I enquired no further, but expected the ball-day with impatience: at length it came; and I was told that I ſhould be dreſſed like a ſhepherdeſs.

Ame. Like a ſhepherdeſs! The dreſs, at leaſt, was well choſen; it muſt be convenient for dancing.

Zel. Convenient indeed! They have an odd idea of ſhepherdeſſes at Paris; you ſhall hear. They began by putting an enormous cuſhion on my head.

Roſ. A cuſhion!

Zel. Yes, it is called a *tocque*.—Then this *tocque* is faſtened on with great pins as long as my arm; upon that is put I know not how much falſe hair—

Ame. Falſe hair, when your own is ſo beautiful!

Zel. No matter, it muſt be falſe hair; they love art ſo much, that they uſe it even when it is of no ſervice, and very frequently when it disfigures: in this manner, with their vile *hériſſon*, they made me an enormous head-dreſs; and on that was put a great hat; and on the hat, gauze and ribbands; and on the ribbands, a buſhel of flowers; and on the flowers half a dozen feathers, the ſhorteſt of them at leaſt two feet long.—

Roſ. Fie, fie, you exaggerate, my dear Zelis; how could you have ſtrength to carry all this?

Zel. I was ſo overburdened with the weight,

that I could neither ſtir, nor turn my head; for the ſmalleſt motion made me loſe my balance, and dragged me down.—Well, in the next place, my clothes were put on; I was laced up in new ſtays, which ſqueezed me ſo, that I could not breathe, and made to wear a *conſideration*—

Ame. What is that?

Zel. A kind of hoop ſtuffed with horſe-hair, ſhaped with iron, and exceſſively heavy: after this, I was decked out in a dreſs quite covered with garlands, and then taken to the ball, and told to mind not to rub off my *rouge*, nor ſpoil my hair, nor tumble my clothes, but to be as merry as I pleaſed.

Roſ. Ah, poor unhappy girl!—and could you dance?

Zel. Ala's! I could ſcarcely walk.

Ame. However, you were let alone at the ball?

Zel. Oh, you are quite wrong: I was ſeated upon a bench, and ordered to wait there till I was aſked to dance. I waited a long time; for I looked ſo melancholy and unhappy, that nobody thought I had the leaſt deſire to dance. At laſt though, I was aſked, but the place was taken, and I returned to my ſeat.

Roſ. How, the place taken!

Zel. Yes, indeed; at theſe balls, the girls who run the beſt, dance the moſt; they go and keep their places.

Ame. What, are there not places for every body?

Roſ. Beſides, it is very impolite to hinder others from dancing.

Zel. I met with ſome young ladies at the ball, much worſe than impolite, for they were cruel; they

they made a joke of my distressed and embarrassed air, they examined me from head to foot, with such a look—a vile look, I assure you: and then, they laughed among themselves, quite loud too.

Ame. Fie upon them. Well, of all you have told us, this is what I cannot form the least idea of.

Zel. I certainly did make a ridiculous figure; but I looked timid and uneasy; therefore, ought not they to have pitied and excused me?

Ros. Oh, if they ever come here with their *tocques*, their *considerations*, their perukes, and their *rouge*, I will make a joke of them too, and challenge them to run; we shall see whether they will overtake me, and jump over a ditch better than I can.

Ame. No, sister, let us never imitate what we condemn; to be the object of derision, is a small misfortune; but to indulge ourselves in so dangerous a propensity as that of deriding others, is a great one, since it proves us both unjust and cruel.

Ros. However, it is hard to be oppressed in order to act the better part.

Ame. True; but, in this case, the person oppressed gains the esteem of every good mind; do you reckon that as nothing?

Ros. No, indeed; for I would rather have Amelia's approbation, than the applause of all those wicked girls who laughed at Zelis's appearance, and made a joke of her uneasiness. Well, but finish the account of your ball, Zelis; did you dance at last?

Zel. Oh, no; the place was always taken, and I soon found myself entirely deserted by all the *beaux*.

Ros. Unfortunate girl! what a pity!—And the ball-room, was that very fine?

Zel. By no means; besides, the heat was so insupportable, that I was almost melted, though I sat motionless on the bench.

Ame. And this is called a great pleasure, a grand entertainment!—Ah, how different is it from our rural balls upon the large grass-plat, where we are not suffocated, where we dance as much as we please, and are so merry!

Zel. Oh, I am quite overjoyed to find myself here again. But let us return to our schemes for to-morrow. I should be much tempted to go to the farm, where there is such good milk!—Oh, talking of that, how does Goody Nicola do? is she not grown very old?

Ame. No; still the same, always in good humour.

Zel. And the little white lamb she promised me?—

Ame. Ah, Zelis, he is dead!

Zel. Alas!——Well, I had a foreboding of it when I left him; don't you remember that?

Ros. Yes, I recollect it. But Nicola is bringing up another for you.

Zel. And have you many flowers this year, Rosina?

Ros. The myrtle you gave me is prettier than ever: I was uneasy about it for two days, because it was blighted by the north wind; but, thanks to Colin's care, it has recovered its beauty.

Zel. Oh, I shall be charmed to see Colin again.

Ame. You will find him prodigiously grown.

Zel. (*To Amelia.*) And the aviary?

Ame. Ah, Zelis, I have, for these three months passed,

passed, had the sweetest dove; it makes me neglect all my other birds; it understands me, knows me, comes to me—and is so pretty!

Zel. White, I dare say?

Ame. Yes.

Zel. A black ring round the neck?

Ame. Yes.

Zel. Oh, I long to see it!

Ame. I will take you to look at it presently.

Zel. And is it fond of you?

Ame. Oh, amazingly!

Zel. Be very careful not to lose it.

Ame. I have not had courage to cut its wings, which makes me rather apprehensive.

Ros. (*Aside.*) This conversation is vastly interesting!

Zel. Do you carry it out a walking?

Ame. Oh, I leave it as little as possible.

Ros. (*Aside.*) Would not any body say she was speaking of a friend? I can bear it no longer. (*She offers to go.*)

Ame. Whither are you going, Rosina?

Ros. To look for some flowers, that I may give them to Zelis.

Ame. Come, and rejoin us in the aviary, I shall carry Zelis thither.

Ros. Very well. (*Aside.*) I shall be there first. [*She runs away.*

SCENE

SCENE IV.

ZELIS, AMELIA.

Zel. (*Looking at Rosina as she goes away.*) HOW hastily she leaves us! What is she at?

Ame. I cannot tell. You know, Zelis, that Rosina often has whims not to be accounted for: she possesses goodness and sensibility; but she frets and makes herself uneasy, almost always without reason.

Zel. Yes, she has odd notions. She loves to torment herself: for instance, she is very fond of you, but it is not a proper fondness; since she does not wholly rely upon you; a mere nothing afflicts and alarms her; this, I think, is called jealousy.

Ame. But I have told Rosina, that she is my dearest friend. If she doubts my sincerity, how can she still love me? If she believes me, how can she be jealous?—Either way, I see no cause for jealousy.

Zel. But you are reasonable, and Rosina, in this respect, is not so.

Ame. What method can be taken to cure her of so cruel a whim?

Zel. I know not, I fear it will be very difficult.

Ame. Let us go and meet her.—But what does Colin want?—He looks quite frightened.

SCENE

SCENE V.

ZELIS, AMELIA, COLIN.

Ame. What do you want, Colin?
Col. Oh, madam!
Ame. Well!
Zel. Speak.—What has happened?
Col. A misfortune!
Ame. Alas! my dove—
Col. It is loſt?
Ame. Dear, dear!
Col. I found the aviary open, and the dove was not there.
Zel. Go, Colin; leave us.—*(Colin goes away.)* I proteſt, my dear Amelia, I am a thouſand times more grieved for the loſs of your dove, than for that of my white lamb.
Ame. Ah, my poor little dove!—Still, if you had but ſeen it!
Zel. Perhaps, it may be found again.
Ame. I do not flatter myſelf with that hope.—If I had only cut its wings!
Zel. Alas, I thought ſo—but would not venture to ſay it.

SCENE VI. and laſt.

ZELIS, AMELIA, COLIN, AND ROSINA, *holding a covered baſket.* Roſina *ſtops at the bottom of the ſtage, and ſays:*

THEY are in a conſternation.
Ame. Do I not hear my ſiſter?

Zel.

Zel. Yes, 'tis ſhe.

Ame. Oh, Roſina, my dove!—

Roſ. I am apprized of your misfortune, and find it even greater than I imagined, for it ſeems quite to overwhelm you.

Ame. What an ironical tone! Ah, ſiſter!—when you were uneaſy about your myrtle, I did not ridicule you.

Roſ. (*Aſide.*) This reproach affects me.—Do I then deſerve it? (*She muſes.*)

Zel. You are unjuſt, Amelia; Roſina loves you, therefore muſt participate in all your troubles; nay, did I not juſt now weep for the loſs of your dove?—and can Roſina's friendſhip be leſs tender?

Ame. Dear Roſina, have I afflicted you? Oh, forgive me!

Roſ. (*Aſide.*) My embaraſſment redoubles.—Ah! what have I done?

Ame. Embrace me, ſiſter.—But what's the matter? ſpeak—

Roſ. (*Embracing her.*) Amelia—

Ame. Well?

Roſ. (*With embarraſſment.*) If you were to find your dove again, ſhould you not be very much pleaſed?

Ame. What? do you know—

Roſ. (*In the ſame tone of voice.*) No, it is a mere queſtion.

Zel. This queſtion aſtoniſhes me.—Roſina, your eyes are caſt down, you ſeem diſconcerted.—Ah, the dove is not loſt; you know where it is.

Ame. What do you ſay, Zelis? Could you think my ſiſter capable of wiſhing to afflict me, to make a ſport of my uneaſineſs, and to deceive me? No, Roſina is irritable, and ſometimes unjuſt; but ſhe

poſſeſſes

possesses as much sincerity as feeling; I know her heart, and cannot suspect it.

Zel. Then let her clear herself.—But look, observe how she blushes.—Oh, what a guilty countenance!—

Ame. What means the situation in which I see you, sister; is it possible?—

Ros. Oh, my dear Amelia!—(*She weeps.*)

Ame. Rosina—what is become of my dove? Do not conceal it from me.

Zel. Well, Rosina has stolen it, that is evident.

Ame. Do you say nothing, sister?

Zel. I will answer for her. The story of the dove is written on her countenance! Rosina was jealous of it; so has stolen and shut up her rival.

Ame. Rosina!—

Ros. Sister, what shall I say to you?—Zelis has guessed right.—Yes, I have got your dove; nevertheless, I meant to restore it to you; but I will not attempt to justify myself. I am fully sensible of my fault; I have given you uneasiness, I have deceived you, I am ungrateful, foolish; in short, I am no longer worthy of Amelia's friendship. You will henceforth love Zelis only, I must expect that.—I can't survive it, 'tis impossible.—Ah, sister! at least, grant me your compassion.

Ame. (*Embracing her.*) Unjust, but dear friend!

Ros. What, do you still love me?

Zel. (*Laughing.*) Yes, next to Zelis, you shall be Amelia's dearest friend.

Ros. Ah, Zelis, what cutting and cruel raillery!

Zel. On this subject, I believe you would think none agreeable.

Ame. Torment her no more; but I cannot recover

cover from my surprize.—You jealous, Rosina, and of what?—a bird?

Zel. She was jealous of me, when we were together; and, in my absence, of the poor dove. She would have been jealous of Goody Nicola, or, indeed, of any thing; for I perceive, that jealous people need neither pretences, nor reasonable causes, in order to give themselves up to their whims.

Ros. Alas! she is right.

Ame. What, Rosina, could you think that I preferred my dove to you?

Ros. Oh, no.—But it engaged your attention, you were incessantly talking of it.

Ame. Well, I do not comprehend you; if I suffer, you suffer with me. That thorn, which yesterday wounded my hand, made you weep; why then do you not likewise participate in my pleasures?

Ros. I am cured for life of these cruel caprices; at least, I hope so. Your mildness, your good sense, and, above every thing, your friendship, at length teaches me the full extent of my injustice.—Come, sister, come and find your dove, it is just by in the little rose-bush.

Ame. I will not take it again; I give it to you, Rosina; keep it, and let the hand which presents the gift, endear it to you.

Ros. Ah, sister, how much I shall henceforth love it!

Zel. Yes, but take care that Amelia, in her turn, does not become jealous.

Ros. Ah, would to heaven!—

Zel. Do you see, how she amends?—she has just praised your sense, yet wishes, in her heart, to see you share her folly.

Ame.

Ame. No, no; Rosina has too much understanding not to perceive, that delicacy, when it amounts to distrust, is a torment to her who experiences it, and the greatest of injuries to the object by whom it is excited: consider this deeply, and daily repeat to yourself, my dear Rosina, that friendship cannot exist without esteem and confidence.

C E C I L I A,

OR

THE SACRIFICE OF FRIENDSHIP;

A D R A M A,

O F O N E A C T.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

CECILIA, *a young novice.*

CALISTA, *another young novice, and friend to Cecilia.*

The Depositary Mother, *or treasurer of the convent.*

The Abbess.

Sister ANGELICA, *the tourier, or girl who attends the turning-box.*

Sister ROSALIA, *a young nun.*

Mademoiselle de Saint FIRMIN, *Cecilia's elder sister.*

The Scene, a provincial convent.

CECILIA;

OR,

THE SACRIFICE OF FRIENDSHIP.

"What sacrifice is great, if made to friendship?" T.

SCENE the First.

THE ABBESS, THE DEPOSITARY MOTHER.

Abb. REALLY, my good Mother, I place all my confidence in you; and speak freely to no other person.

D. Mo. You know my attachment, madam; it is of an old date.

Abb. Well, a word with you about the two young ladies who are to pronounce their vows to-morrow; I hear they are ill; but, positively, that shall not retard the ceremony.

D. Mo. You are perfectly right, madam; such a vigil as this, should not come twice over.

Abb. These are the sort of things which admit of no procrastination. I have seen people retract at the very moment.

D. Mo. The noviciate should be shortened; a year is too long. Many ideas start up in a young head during a year. *(She laughs.)* Hah, hah, hah!

Abb. You still have charming spirits, my good Mother.—Well, I am of your opinion; if the noviciate lasted only six months we should have many more nuns.

D. Mo. How can the ministry neglect this? What are they employed about?

Abb. Leave that to me; I will present a memorial upon the subject.

D. Mo. And, if you prevail, it will be a great saving to you, and a deal of money over.

Abb. As how?

D. Mo. Why all the sweetmeats, chocolate, coffee, and tea, which are consumed during the noviciate.—Every nun has cost us her share in the year—if they had it only six months, 'twould be no bad bargain. *(She laughs again.)* Hah, hah, hah!

Abb. Indeed, Mother, this is a good hit. *(She laughs till she coughs.)* Nobody but you, can ever make me laugh.—Well, to return to these girls; what ails them?

D. Mo. Cecilia looks very much as if she had been crying all night, her eyes are swelled as big

as

as my fift; however, ſhe makes no complaint, but is contented to keep ſilence. As for Caliſta, ſhe does not ſeem quite ſo melancholy: beſides, you know ſhe is by nature giddy, lively, and inconſiderate; but ſhe ſays, ſhe has got a fever.

Abb. That will be nothing, that will be nothing; we underſtand that.

D. Mo. Aye, aye, we have gone through it all. (*She laughs.*) Hah, hah, hah!

Abb. Ten years are paſſed by, ſince I made up my mind.

D. Mo. And above twelve, ſince I made up mine.

Abb. How old are you?

D. Mo. Threeſcore and upwards.

Abb. Uſe reconciles us to any thing; but the beginning is harſh.

D. Mo. True, we do not grow accuſtomed all at once.

Abb. Come, though, I muſt talk with theſe novices, their minds ſhould be ſettled: they are both girls of faſhion, eſpecially Cecilia, ſhe is of a diſtinguiſhed family in this province, and that gives a good air to a convent.

D. Mo. I take her to be very fickle and inconſiderate.

Abb. Yet, ſhe appears ſo mild, ſo prudent!—

D. Mo. Hum! I ſomewhat ſuſpect the truth of her call; do you remember her averſion to a convent when a child?

Abb. Yes, ſhe really took delight in ſaying, ſhe would never be a nun.

D. Mo. Then, all on a ſudden, ſhe comes back to us at ſeventeen to take the veil, notwithſtanding the intreaties of her family, and the tears of her ſiſter.—All this is not natural.—And the ſighs

which eſcape her, the grief by which ſhe is ſubdued—in ſhort, I have never been able, all through her noviciate, to procure a laugh from her, but what was forced.

Abb. You are right; there certainly is ſomething lurking under this: go and ſend her to me; I poſitively muſt talk with her.

D. Mo. I will go directly.

Abb. But hear me; take ſix pounds of coffee and two loaves of ſugar out of my cloſet; divide them, and let them be carried—

D. Mo. Yes, I underſtand; to Cecilia's and Caliſta's cells.—Come, come, the laſt day, it is not worth while to be niggardly; I will enlarge the parcel, by adding two cakes of chocolate.—And this, ſerves to remind me of the proverb—

Abb. What proverb?

D. Mo. About flies that are caught with honey. (*She laughs.*) Hah, hah, hah!

Abb. Indeed, your ſallies are charming! One would think you were only twenty.

D. Mo. I fly to execute your orders. (*She goes out.*)

Abb. (*Alone.*) What a part is that of an Abbeſs! to how many things muſt ſhe attend!—I really wonder that I am equal to it—ſtill, the ſituation has advantages.——Who's here?—It is Cecilia.

SCENE II.

THE ABBESS, CECILIA.

Abb. COME, my dear ſiſter, come; I have not ſeen you before, this whole morning, which I was juſt now regretting to the Depoſitary Mother.

Cecil. You are very kind, madam.

Abb. Have you breakfaſted, my child?

Cecil. No, madam; I cannot eat.

Abb. Daughter, I know you complained of the coldneſs of your cell, and I have ordered a little ſtove to be carried thither; you will have it to-morrow.

Cecil. I thank you, madam.

Abb. Daughter, what a glorious day will to-morrow be!

Cecil. Alas!—

Abb. How I love that ſigh!—it naturally deſcribes the tender emotions, the pious joy with which you muſt be tranſported.

Cecil. Ah, madam!—

Abb. Weep, weep, ſiſter; put no reſtraint upon yourſelf, you ought not; for you cannot be ſufficiently affected by the thought of that happineſs which awaits you.

Cecil. Then, I may ceaſe to reſtrain myſelf?

Abb. Certainly, daughter.——Perhaps, your tears might offend the weak, and evil-minded, becauſe ſuch perſons would miſconſtrue the motive from which they flow; therefore, conceal them from worldly eyes; but among us, my dear, among your ſiſters, you need not be afraid of ridiculous interpretations; we all have

felt the ſame emotions, the ſame ſweet holy raptures which now agitate you; we know what they are.

Cecil. Yes, madam, indeed—I believe you read my heart—for I have no deceit, and can hide but ill what paſſes there.

Abb. Go, my dear; and, truſt me, you have the beſt, and moſt deciſive call I ever ſaw—but what does our ſiſter, the *Tourier*, want?

SCENE III.

CECILIA, THE ABBESS, SISTER ANGELICA.

S. An. THIS letter, was juſt now given in at the turning-box; it is for ſiſter Cecilia.

Abb. Deliver it to me. (*To Cecilia.*) Daughter, you know the cuſtom of my houſe; during the noviciate, I am bound to—

Cecil. Read it, madam.

Abb. Siſter Angelica, withdraw.

An. My lady, you give a breakfaſt this morning; and the Depoſitary Mother ſaid, you would allow me to be preſent, my lady.

Abb. Yes, ſiſter; ſo order every thing to be ready in half an hour; and give notice to our mothers and ſiſters. [*Siſter Angelica goes out.*

Cecil. Permit me, madam, to look at the handwriting of that letter.

Abb. Here, my love.

Cecil. Hah! it is my ſiſter's hand. Oh, madam, read it directly!

Abb. (*Puts on her ſpectacles, opens the letter, and reads aloud.*) "This letter, my dear friend, is "merely

"merely to apprize you of my arrival. I have "finished all the business which detained me at "Paris, excepting my marriage, which I cannot "conclude till I have seen you. I should have "been with you before now, but for a delay oc-"casioned by some very extraordinary events. I "shall have the happiness of embracing you on "Thursday next"—

Cecil. Thursday—'tis this very day!—

Abb. Yes, to be sure—but let us go on. (*She reads.*) "That will be the eve of the dreadful "day which is to engage you for ever—Oh, my "dear sister! notwithstanding the sincerity of your "call, notwithstanding every thing you have told "me on that subject, I cannot think of it with-"out shuddering.—(*The Abbess interrupting herself.*) A very worldly style this!

Cecil. Proceed madam, I beseech you—

Abb. (*Going on.*) Hum.—Without shudder-ing.—"What a society for my charming Cecilia, "is that of a set of bigots!" (*The Abbess stops.*)

Cecil. Do you wish me to finish the letter, madam?—Perhaps, you are tired?

Abb. Methinks, your sister is not a woman of very refined principles.

Cecil. I confess, she has rather a slight opinion of convents.—But once more, let me ask for the conclusion of my letter, madam.

Abb. (*After having read it to herself.*) There—I have read it; and really ought not to put such a thing into your hands; for, positively, it is only fit to burn. Come, come, attend to me, my dear sister; to-morrow you take the vows, and to-day must be entirely devoted to meditation and pious exercises; therefore, I give you warning that you

ſhall not ſee your ſiſter; we will accommodate her in the neighbourhood; I will do myſelf the honour of preſenting her with your excuſes; and, when to-morrow is paſſed, you may repeat them yourſelf.

Cecil. Madam, ſuffer me to repreſent—

Abb. No anſwer, daughter; when I dictate, you ought to obey.

Cecil. I have only one word to urge; honour it with your attention, madam. For the laſt two years I have been determined to become a nun, during which time, my ſiſter has ineffectually endeavoured to diſſuade me; therefore, you cannot ſuppoſe ſhe will now obtain in an inſtant, what ſhe vainly attempted for ſo long a period. I love her beyond all expreſſion, ſhe is my only friend, I wiſh to ſee her the very moment ſhe arrives; and if that wiſh be not complied with, madam, I ſhall go to-morrow, and in ſome other convent ſeek for more indulgence, more confidence, more feeling. If you accept my propoſal, to-morrow I may ſubmit implicitly to your commands; but to-day, at leaſt, I brook no controul, and will obey no voice, but that of reaſon.

Abb. Alas, my dear child, do not agitate yourſelf in this manner! you love your ſiſter, and would be ſorry not to ſee her, that is enough.—I ſubmit.—Embrace me, my dear daughter.—(*She embraces her.*) Somebody comes. Oh, it is all our dear ſiſters, for the breakfaſt.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

CECILIA, THE ABBESS, CALISTA, THE DEPOSITARY MOTHER, SISTER ANGELICA, SISTER ROSALIA.

D. Mo. BREAKFAST is ready; and here are we, all in a right cue to do it credit; we have not devout ſtomachs for nothing. (*She laughs.*) Hah, hah, hah!

Abb. Devout ſtomachs!—(*She laughs.*) Hah, hah, hah! (*All the nuns laugh, excepting the two novices.*)

S. Ang. The Depoſitary Mother, always has ſome merry joke.

S. Roſ. She is conſtantly the ſame.

Cal. (*In a low voice to Cecilia.*) Let us laugh too.

Cecil. (*In a low voice to Caliſta.*) Alas, this gives me a very different inclination!

Abb. Siſter Caliſta, you have the look of perfect health; what a blooming countenance!

Cal. If that be true, my countenance is very deceitful; for I was extremely ill all night; owing, I ſuppoſe, to the coldneſs of our cells.

Abb. Do not make yourſelf uneaſy, daughter; to-morrow you ſhall have a little ſtove; and in the mean while, ſiſter Roſalia, do you order one of my ſmall chafing-diſhes to be delivered out for her uſe.

Cal. (*Aſide.*) The chafing-diſh is more to be depended upon than the ſtove.

D. Mo. Siſter Roſalia, add a little bottle of *Hip-

* A ſort of home-made wine.

pocras, it warms still better, especially at returning from matins. *(She laughs.)* Hah, hah, hah!

Abb. Matins! that's a good one! *(She laughs, and the nuns laugh; the two novices always excepted.)* Who can say there is no mirth in a convent?

Cal. For my part, I will maintain it, that here, we constantly laugh without a cause.

D. Mo. You will see otherguess things in three months time, when you are really one of us. *(She laughs, as do all the nuns.)* We never grow old; that is one of our privileges. *(She laughs violently, as do the Abbess, and the other nuns, with loud shouts.)*

Cal. (In a low voice to Cecilia.) Could you conceive such an excess of folly?

Cecil. (In a low voice to Calista.) It quite provokes me.

Abb. She has the most out of the way ideas —

D. Mo. And they come, like March in Lent.* *(The laugh is resumed with increased violence; they all hold their sides, and make an immoderate noise.)*

Cecil. (In a low voice to Calista.) Would any body believe this, who did not see it?

Cal. It begins to divert me.

Abb. I declare, I cry again—I can hold out no longer.

S. An. I was almost suffocated.

S. Ros. And I too: think of March in Lent!

D. Mo. And of the breakfast.

Abb. Let us go, let us go. Come, sisters. *(She taps the Depositary Mother on the shoulder in a friendly manner, saying:)* Oh, what an excellent joker! *(The Depositary Mother offers her arm to the Abbess, and*

* A French saying, which signifies, to come conveniently. T.

whis-

whispers something in her ear; then laughs, as does the Abbess, and both go laughing out.)

S. Ang. What did she say?

S. Ros. I could not hear, but something very droll, no doubt. *(They follow the Abbess, and the D. Mother laughing.)*

SCENE V.

CALISTA, CECILIA.

Cal. CECILIA, shall we follow them?

Cecil. Do you please yourself; I intend to stay here.

Cal. We shall lose all the Depositary Mother's lively sallies.

Cecil. Rest satisfied; they will be repeated to us.

Cal. I wonder how you could keep your countenance at their *March in Lent.*—I own, it made me laugh; such extreme folly is positively quite diverting.

Cecil. It rather worries me; I must confess; it is so frequently repeated.

Cal. I cannot think there is, in the world, another convent like this.

Cecil. Unfortuately, there are many. All we see here, is the inevitable consequence of ignorance and idleness. Still, among the nuns, some truly respectable persons may be found; but they keep close within their cells, and never appear; while the greater part are intriguing, meddling, and narrow-minded. There is no medium in a nun; she must have most of the faults I mention, or be a saint.

Cal. Yet these are the persons intrusted with the care of youth!

Cecil. Believe me, dear Calista, no tender mother, who possibly can educate her daughter, will ever place her in a Convent *.—But who comes to interrupt us?

SCENE VI.

CECILIA, CALISTA, SISTER ROSALIA.

S. Ros. SISTERS, the lady Abbess has sent me to know why you do not come.

Cal. We are not hungry; and do not choose any breakfast.

S. Ros. Oh, you should come, were it only to hear the Depositary Mother. I assure you, she never was so entertaining before; lady Abbess said so.

Cecil. I do not doubt it; and we will join you after breakfast, sister.

S. Ros. The Depositary Mother has been singing a little song, which was delightful; for the lady Abbess said so: she is going to sing again; if you would—

Cecil. No, sister, we have not any inclination for musick.

* It is necessary to observe, that the two novices are in a provincial convent; and likewise, that what is here advanced, should be understood in a general sense. Every criticism, which admitted not of exceptions, would be unjust; and we may even meet with provincial convents, exempt from the absurdities described in *this little drama*: that of Origny, in Picardy, for instance, is perfectly well regulated; and exhibits, without any mixture of littleness and affectation, an union of all those virtues which do honour to the character of a nun, and serve to render it respectable.

S. Ros.

S. Rof. I am ſure ſhe would make you laugh; lady Abbeſs ſaid ſo.

Cecil. Thank her for theſe attentions, ſiſter; and ſay that, with her leave, we will at preſent decline availing ourſelves of them. (*Siſter Roſalia goes out.*)

Cal. What attention they pay to the novices!

Cecil. And how artful they are in ſo doing!

Cal. Now that we are alone, my dear Cecilia, I abſolutely muſt profit by the moment, and open my heart to you.

Cecil. Why, what have you to ſay?

Cal. You are ſenſible of the tenderneſs with which you have inſpired me; you are the only perſon here, whom I love.

Cecil. Well, my dear Caliſta!

Cal. You are oppreſſed by ſecret grief which you conceal from me.

Cecil. No, Caliſta, you miſtake.

Cal. Ah! ſpite of yourſelf, every thing diſcovers it. I do not watch you; but the eye of friendſhip is clear-ſighted!—Oh, Cecilia! I ſaw your tears flow again this morning.

Cecil. True, I do not deny it; and by quitting the world, I break through ties which are dear to me—for I have a ſiſter, and ſuch a ſiſter!—

Cal. Yes, I know—

Cecil. I love her entirely. An orphan, almoſt from the cradle, the firſt and only object, to which my infant fondneſs could direct itſelf, was my ſiſter; in her I centered all the affection of which my heart is capable, and this heart overflows with tenderneſs!—She is ſomewhat older than I am; and her judgement (being ſooner matured than mine) enlightened my childhood, and formed my principles and underſtanding. I found every thing in her; advice, example, comfort,

fort, and kindness. I have been accustomed to consider her as the clearest of guides, the tenderest of sisters, and the most indulgent of friends: I am certain she would think nothing a sacrifice, if made for me; and, for her sake, I would resign even life itself.

Cal. Is she not upon the eve of being married?

Cecil. She is.

Cal. And to the same person for whom she was destined in her childhood?

Cecil. Yes; motives of interest occasioned a delay, but the treaty is now renewed.

Cal. Is it a match of inclination?

Cecil. Convenience was the first inducement; however, in course of time, my sister naturally became attached to a man, who possessed great merit, and whom, she was ordered, by her relations, to consider as her future husband. The young man's father died, when things immediately wore a very different aspect; for his mother, an ambitious woman, formed other plans, and forbid the match. Her son, though overwhelmed with distress, had the virtue to obey, but at the same time, retained the courage to declare, he would never be another's; and he now receives a due reward for his affection and constancy.

Cal. But, my dear Cecilia, how could you resist the intreaties of mademoiselle de Saint-Firmin, and resolve to leave her for ever? Your fortune is genteel; that uncle, by whom you were so much beloved, made it equal to your sister's, before he went to India; you might live happily in the world. Oh, there too surely is some fatal, latent cause, which prompts you to renounce it.

Cecil. Were I not born for the mode of life I am

am going to embrace, and did not inclination lead me to it, ſtill, be aſſured, my dear Caliſta, if we enter upon ſolitude, with a mind calm and ſpotleſs, we may, at firſt, endure it without deſpair, and very ſoon, even without pain. I neither regret the world, nor its pleaſures; pleaſures, ſo unſubſtantial, as never to ſatisfy, though they may dazzle for a moment. I only regret my ſiſter; and, if ſhe is happy, I muſt be ſo likewiſe.

Cal. To neglect ourſelves, and attend only to the happineſs of one darling object, is love indeed!—I am unable to obtain your entire confidence, but how much does that, which I am led to think your motive, ſtrengthen, nay redouble, the friendſhip I feel for you!

Cecil. Huſh, my dear Caliſta; ſomebody is coming.

SCENE VII.

THE DEPOSITARY MOTHER, CALISTA, CECILIA.

D. Mo. JOY! joy! I come to announce the arrival of mademoiſelle de Saint-Firmin.

Cecil. My ſiſter!

D. Mo. She will be here in a moment; but I muſt give you notice, that the lady Abbeſs wiſhes me to be preſent at your interview.

Cecil. Do as you pleaſe, I have no ſecrets to tell her.

D. Mo. Secrets! Oh, for that matter, daughter, we very well know you have none with us; you are not naturally fond of diſguiſes: look'ye now, this was juſt what I told my lady this morning; ſhe is like

me, ſays I—her heart on her hand—her heart on her hand.—Therefore, I' ſtay here merely for the rule's ſake —Come, my dear, no tender whining ſcenes I deſire; reſolution and gaiety are what we expect from you.

Cecil. Of reſolution—I have given ſufficient proofs; but as for gaiety, I flatter myſelf you will diſpenſe with that.

D. Mo. We diſpenſe with none of thoſe things of which we give the example; ſo you will find no indulgence on this point.

[*She laughs.*

Cal. (*Aſide.*) Here is a joke loſt.—What a pity it is that the community are not preſent; how they would laugh at it!

D. Mo. Siſter Caliſta, leave us; mademoiſelle de Saint-Firmin is coming.

Cal. I hear a noiſe.

Cecil. Oh, it is my ſiſter!

Cal. (*In a low voice to Cecilia.*) Adieu, dear Cecilia; ſummon all your reſolution.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE VIII.

CECILIA, THE DEPOSITARY MOTHER, MADEMOISELLE DE SAINT-FIRMIN.

Mademoiſelle de Saint-Firmin, *running.*

WHERE is ſhe, where is ſhe?

Cecil. Ah, ſiſter!

Mademoiſelle de Saint-Firmin. (*Throwing herſelf into her ſiſter's arms.*) Cecilia! ſiſter! in what a ſtate do I find you!—

D. Mo.

D. Mo. In very good health, I'll be bound for that.—Indeed, mademoiſelle, our dear ſiſter Cecilia is quite a little ſaint; ſhe edifies the whole houſe; and therefore, is ſo beloved, ſo indulged! oh, quite our ſpoiled child!

[*She laughs.*

Madem. de Saint-Firmin, contemplating Cecilia. What dreadful paleneſs!

Cecil. The ſurprize—the joy!—

Madem. de St.-Fir. How you are altered!

D. Mo. It is only to-day: ſhe generally looks freſh and blooming as a little Jeſus in wax.

Cecil. Siſter, I repeat it, the pleaſure of ſeeing you again has thrown me into ſuch an agitation as cannot but affect my looks.

Madem. de St.-Fir. Am I beloved, to that exceſs?—Ah, Cecilia, ought I to believe it?—when you abandon me, when, to-morrow!—But, for the laſt time, may I not ſpeak to you without a witneſs?

D. Mo. No, mademoiſelle, our rule does not permit of that.

Madem. de St.-Fir. What, madam, do you intend to ſtay here?

D. Mo. I am obliged to do ſo.

Madem. de St.-Fir. I am ſorry on your account, madam; for, in this caſe, I certainly ſhall not reſtrain myſelf; and may, perhaps, ſay more than you will like to hear.

D. Mo. You joke, mademoiſelle. I have too good an opinion of your politeneſs to believe—

Madem. de St.-Fir. Politeneſs is much to be conſidered, when you are wreſting away, tearing from me for ever the happineſs of my life!—Liſten, oh, liſten to me, dear Cecilia! it is not yet too late, you ſtill are free. If you perſiſt in your

your resolution, you will drive me to despair.—Interrupt me not. I know all you are going to say: you would tell me, that your call is sincere, that the inclination which first led you to embrace this mode of life is now become steady and vehement, such would be your discourse. Alas! do not I know it all by heart?—I consider true piety as the most delightful, the most elevated sentiment we are capable of feeling; for, if devoid of that, our virtue must always be unstable, and our happiness imperfect. Still, without engagements, without vows, are you not at liberty to lead whatsoever kind of life you best may like?

D. Ma. The case is quite different, mademoiselle; all the merit is confined to the sacrifice, to the vows.

Madem. de St.-Fir. That is the merit of the moment, a merit which, at eighteen, can only spring from enthusiasm or seduction. Let us be free, and then, voluntarily and from choice, but unfettered by oaths, adopt every virtue, and practise every austerity of the cloister: then, we shall have the additional glory of acting without compulsion, and the happiness of presenting the Supreme Being with the only adoration worthy of him, that of the heart and mind. However, I know, my dear Cecilia, how little impression such reasoning makes on you—but I have stronger arguments to offer. You are blessed with a feeling heart; could you be insensible to a joy so sweet, as that of doing good, and employing a considerable fortune in the relief of misery?

Cecil. What are you saying? A moderate fortune only was my lot.

Madem.

Madem. de St.-Fir. Well, ſiſter, if your lot were changed; if you were become a rich heireſs; if heaven had intruſted you with an immenſe fortune; if, with the power of being uſeful to mankind, to the unhappy—

Cecil. What do I hear!—Siſter, explain yourſelf.—

D. Mo. Then ſhe may be a benefactreſs to a convent.

Madem. de St.-Fir. To enrich thoſe, who make vows of poverty, is not, as I think, the beſt application of wealth.—But to found hoſpitals, and employ ourſelves in eſtabliſhments beneficial to mankind;- to form the regulations, preſide over the execution, attend to, and beſtow upon them the utmoſt aſſiduity; theſe are plans which become a truly religious, noble, and beneficent ſpirit. Neither is it in the depth of retirement that ſuch plans can be accompliſhed. In ſhort, ſiſter, I am now going to ſpeak to you without diſguiſe; our uncle is dead, and has bequeathed to us a moſt ſplendid fortune.—This new ſituation enjoins new duties on your part; while uſeleſs to the world, we are allowed to follow our own inclinations; but the poſſibility of aſſiſting the unhappy, and ſetting a great example, ſhould force us away from the moſt pleaſing ſolitude. Oh, when able to live for the benefit of others, can we reſolve to live only for ourſelves?—Cecilia, you are ſilent; but I ſee your tears flow—Speak! what am I to hope?

Cecil. Is it poſſible?—Siſter!—Kind heaven!—

D. Mo. Siſter Cecilia will not ſuffer herſelf to be tempted, I am ſure of that. (*Aſide.*) Let me run and tell the Abbeſs; for the danger, to me, ſeems imminent. [*She goes out haſtily.*

Madem.

Madem. de St.-Fir. What, my dear Cecilia, can you ſtill pauſe? Oh, ſiſter! which way muſt your eyes be opened? Have friendſhip and reaſon for ever loſt their influence? Then liſten to compaſſion at leaſt. I ſhall die if you make this dreadful ſacrifice.—I can enjoy no happineſs without you.—Take pity on my weakneſs, if it be one.—It is your ſiſter, your friend, who on her knees conjures you. (*She throws herſelf at Cecilia's feet.*)

Cecil. (*Raiſing her.*) Siſter—oh, ſiſter!—could you read my ſoul—Ah, let me breathe a moment!

Madem. de St.-Fir. Cecilia—proceed—

SCENE IX.

MADEMOISELLE DE SAINT-FIRMIN, CECILIA, CALISTA.

Caliſ. (*Running.*) OH, what have I juſt heard, my dear Cecilia?

Madem. de St.-Fir. Alas! Cecilia has not yet ſpoken.

Caliſ. I am going to ſpeak for her. (*To Mademoiſelle de St.-Firmin.*) Spite of her cautious reſerve, I have read her heart; and the ſituation in which I ſee her, confirms my ſuſpicions.

Cecil. Ah, ſiſter! Ah, Caliſta!

Madem. de St.-Fir. Well?

Caliſ. (*To Mademoiſelle de St.-Firmin*) To augment your fortune, and reſtore you to your lover, by removing the obſtacle which the avarice of an unjuſt

unjuſt mother oppoſed to your happineſs, Cecilia would have ſacrificed herſelf: her taſte for ſecluſion was a mere pretence.

Madem. de St.-Fir. Cecilia! —Good heaven! (*She falls into a chair.*)

Cecil. (*Throwing herſelf into her ſiſter's arms.*) My ſiſter!—my dear friend!—judge of my happineſs at this moment!

Madem. de St.-Fir. And was it then for me, you were going to become a victim?—What a cruel, yet dear teſtimony of unexampled affection!—But, how could I ſuffer myſelf to be impoſed upon? and how could you think it poſſible to enſure my happineſs, by ſacrificing your own?—The exceſs of your generoſity rendered you unjuſt and barbarous; you ſeparated yourſelf from your friend, without conſidering that ſhe muſt participate in all the horrours of your lot, and that the fate of each depends upon the other.

Cecil. Perhaps, I was miſtaken—but, in my place, my ſiſter would have done as I did.

Cal. What a wonderful event!—to me, how joyful!—though joyful to no one in this houſe, but me. The nuns are outrageous; the account given by the Depoſitary Mother, has alarmed the whole community. They were in cloſe conference when I came here, and you will ſoon ſee the Abbeſs. Oh, ſhe is come.

SCENE

SCENE X. and last.

THE ABBESS, THE DEPOSITARY MOTHER, MADEMOISELLE DE SAINT-FIRMIN, CECILIA, CALISTA.

The Abbess, *to Mademoiselle de Saint-Firmin.*

MADEMOISELLE, it is time to put an end to the scandal you have thrown upon my house, by attempting (though in vain) to seduce one of my novices. I beg you will please to retire immediately. (*To Cecilia.*) And for you, my dear child, I know what a courageous resistance you have made; and thereby my esteem for you is increased, and so is that of the whole community.

Cecil. If I can obtain it on no other terms, you are deceived, and I am undeserving, madam; for I mean to accompany my sister, and never will I separate myself from her again. (*She embraces her.*)

Abb. How, Cecilia, could you be capable of such disgraceful weakness?

D. Mo. No, no; it is only a wicked temptation of which she is going to repent, I dare answer for it.

Madem. de St.-Fir. Come, sister; let us delay no longer.

Cecil. One moment.—(*To Calista.*) Amiable, dear Calista, my joy would be unalloyed, quite perfect, if on this happy day I were not to part from you; and should prudential motives only detain you here, friendship offers you an asylum; condescend to accept it.—

Abb.

Abb. (*To Cecilia.*) What! dare you in my presence—

Cal. Calm your fears, Madam; you will be satisfied with my answer. (*To Cecilia.*) You fill me with gratitude; but your lot does not excite my envy; I am contented with my own, which nothing can induce me to alter. Virtue, will make me happy here; it will make you so, on a more brilliant theatre; nor can true joy be derived from any other source; as you will experience amid tumult and splendour, while I shall do the same in solitude and obscurity.

THE

GENEROUS ENEMIES;

A DRAMA,

OF TWO ACTS.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

The Marchionefs d'ELSIGNY.

CIDALIA.

The Baronefs de TRAZILE.

DORINDA, *fifter-in-law to the Baronefs.*

MELITA, *a relation of the Marchionefs's.*

VICTORINA, *the Marchionefs's woman.*

Scene, the Marchionefs's houfe at Paris.

THE GENEROUS ENEMIES.

Un ſexe né pour plaire, eſt-il fait pour haïr ?
Le Prix du Silence, Comédie de Boiſſy.

Can a ſex born to pleaſe, be likewiſe formed to hate ?
Sweet the delight, when the gall'd heart
Feels Conſolation's lenient hand
Bind up the wound from Fortune's dart
With friendſhip's life-ſupporting band !
Hayley's ode to John Howard, Eſq. T.

ACT I.

SCENE the Firſt.

The Stage repreſents a Saloon.

THE MARCHIONESS, VICTORINA.

The Marchioneſs, *looking at a paper.*

WHAT a multitude of viſits !—ſuch a liſt !—How lucky was I to eſcape ſeeing all theſe people !—Poſitively, half their names are unknown to me.

Vict. Because you have forgotten them, which is very natural, after an absence of three tedious years.

Mar. You don't seem to regret our departure from Sweden, Victorina?

Vict. No place can be regretted, but Paris—and even you, madam, on arriving yesterday, and passing that charming barrier, were quite in extasies!

Mar. Oh, Victorina! never did I taste such happiness as on the moment when I found myself restored to the arms of my parents!—They so well deserve my affection!—With what kindness did they condescend to meet me, travelling an hundred leagues, merely to see their child two days sooner!—What emotion, what joy did I experience on discovering their carriage, rushing from my own, and throwing myself at their feet!—How truly do I compassionate those flinty bosoms which are incapable of feeling, in its utmost force, the delightful sensation of filial love; that pure, that first inclination, graven on the heart even before reason makes it a virtue; and which, from habit and gratitude, becomes, at length, so pleasing, so tender, and so sacred!

Vict. I flatter myself, madam, you will not again leave a family who derive all their joy from you. Indeed, if the Marquis returns to his embassy in Sweden, and happens to ask my opinion, I shall advise him to let us remain here.—What think you, madam?

Mar. 'Tis grievous, no doubt, to quit our native country, but it is so pleasing to fulfil our duty!—the recompence ever exceeds the pain. Did not I experience this? I accompanied M. d'Elsigny, and departed, I acknowledge, overwhelmed

whelmed with sorrow; but how amply are my sufferings now rewarded, by his confidence, gratitude, and lively tender friendship! The sacrifice I made, has not only intitled me to his esteem, but even increased the regard of my family and friends, and rendered me more amiable in the eyes of the world; my heart, my self-love, must be equally satisfied; in short, I am re-united to all whom I hold dear, and possessed of an additional claim to their affection. Can we pay too highly for such happiness?

Vict. You are right, madam, and I perceive that for interest's sake alone, we always should act well, being, sooner or later, sure of a reward. The pleasure you derived, both last night and this morning, from seeing all your relations and friends again, from receiving their praises and answering their questions; the tears of joy they shed over you, the transports you inspired them with, all this could not have been, but for your journey and long absence: without reckoning that the plays and operas, (with which you were satiated when we set off) will now possess the charm of novelty, and appear as delightful as they did the first year of your marriage.

Mar. Thus you find, we frequently suffer ourselves to be afflicted by what may prove a source of good. Happy were it for us all, had we more fortitude and resignation! I am rewarded for what I have done; and so are you for having accompanied me, dear Victorina; since, by that proof of attachment, you completely won my friendship. You were such a comfort to me in a foreign country; we talked of France; we frequently conversed together; and being now convinced of the goodness of your heart and the

rectitude of your ſentiments, I promiſe ſtill to make you my companion.

Vict. So emboldened, madam, let me riſque a queſtion, which, before, I did not preſume to aſk. I know how much you love madame Cidalia; and although, when ſhe came here yeſterday, I ſaw her but a moment, ſtill, I diſcovered ſuch a melancholy, ſuch a change!—Does it proceed from her being leſs happy than heretofore?

Mar. Alas! ſhe is greatly to be pitied; having, for theſe two years paſſed, been at variance with her intimate friend.

Vict. That friend who married again, and is now the Baroneſs de Trazile?

Mar. The ſame.

Vict. Well, I am very ſorry; they were ſo much attached to each other, ſo amiable!

Mar. (*Looking at her watch.*) Though 'tis ten o'clock, Melita is not come; and yet I muſt pay two viſits before dinner.

Vict. Time, ſeems to have made no change in that lady, for I remember you always grumbled at her want of punctuality; how ſhe uſed to tire your patience, and at the ſame inſtant make you laugh, the firſt year ſhe was married, when you were her *chaperon*;—and how ſhe ridiculed the leſſons you gave, becauſe you were almoſt as young as herſelf!

Mar. She is only three and twenty; ſtill, notwithſtanding her youth and occaſional levity of manners, ſhe has a large ſhare of ſenſe; beſides, ſhe is ſo open and unaffected, her heart is ſo good! —But I hear ſomebody—perhaps, 'tis ſhe.

Vict. Yes, indeed.

Mar. Then leave us, Victorina.

SCENE

SCENE II.

THE MARCHIONESS, MELITA.

Mar. WELL! you have kept me waiting an whole hour.

Mel. I did it on purpose to convince you that absence has no effect on me; and that I never vary.

Mar. You might have spared yourself this trouble, for I always thought you incorrigible.

Mel. Very pretty!—And now I must hear a little lecture, then you will give me a caress, and so I shall be re-instated in my privileges; for thus, all our interviews formerly commenced.

Mar. I'll reserve my lecture for another time; at present, let us talk of Cidalia; and tell me every thing you know respecting that strange breach.

Mel. Why she wrote to you; did she not mention it?

Mar. She merely said, that she was much to be pitied, and could never console herself for the loss of a friend whom she should always love, and whose place in her heart could not be supplied by another. The Baroness's letters were much to the same purport: in short, I found it impossible to obtain from either, the smallest explanation respecting the cause of their difference. But people frequently say, what they would not venture to write; therefore you, who have not left them, must know more than I do.

Mel. Believe me, I was neither unconcerned, nor incurious; nay, I questioned them both with indefatigable perseverance; yet have not hitherto

been able to extort the moſt trifling mark of their confidence on this ſubject; and in ſpite of diſputes, they ſtill ſeem to underſtand each other, ever appearing animated by one ſoul.

Mar. How unfortunate, that two perſons of ſuch diſtinguiſhed merit ſhould ceaſe to agree! What could ſever bands, formed by a ſimilarity of principles and diſpoſition? Alas! if a tie ſo pleaſing, is not durable, where may we look for any permanent felicity?

Mel. Though I cannot give you certain information as to the cauſe of this extraordinary affair, ſtill, I will acquaint you with my own conjectures, and thoſe of the world. In the firſt place it is believed, and indeed with probability, that the quarrel chiefly originated from the Baroneſs's marriage, although not apparent till eight months afterwards.

Mar. Cidalia might juſtly cenſure the choice of her friend, as the Baron's indifferent character, together with the ſmallneſs of his fortune, muſt naturally prompt her to think that connexion a very blameable weakneſs.

Mel. The event has but too well juſtified ſuch an opinion; for the Baroneſs is ſuppoſed to feel a heavy load of inward ſorrow, added to ſuch embarraſſment in her finances!—Are you acquainted with her huſband's ſiſter?

Mar. Dorinda?—no; but I have heard much to her diſadvantage.

Mel. I heſitate not, in attributing the breach between Cidalia and the Baroneſs, entirely to her: there is ſomething bad couched under that buſineſs, which time will diſcover; and ſo far is evident, Dorinda abhors Cidalia, defames her without any caution, and has even ſucceeded in perſuading

ſuading moſt people to think that ſhe alone is culpable: yet all this is done without exhibiting one direct charge againſt her; but calumny inſinuates itſelf under various forms! and probably, becauſe unable to prove any thing in particular, ſhe confines herſelf to vague accuſations merely, levelled at Cidalia's heart and character: thus, aſſerting nothing, yet giving room for much to be underſtood: and how often has a myſterious air, a ſigh, or an exclamation, tended more effectually to blacken innocence, than the moſt ſpecious falſehoods could have done!—In a word, Dorinda's conduct induces the world to believe, that honour alone reſtrains her from ſpeaking more plainly; and, by this vile artifice, ſhe appears to guard the reputation ſhe calumniates.

Mar. Deteſtable hypocriſy!—whence come thy powers of deluſion?—and how can people venture to profeſs themſelves incapable of hating the object they defame?—What concern this melancholy recital gives me!—But is ſo deſigning, ſo wicked a woman as Dorinda, is ſhe ſuppoſed to have obtained that place in the Baroneſs's affection, which the gentle, amiable Cidalia occupied?

Mel. No; do not believe it; artifice may ſubjugate, but never will attach. The Baroneſs ſuffers herſelf to be governed by her ſiſter-in-law; her eyes are faſcinated, her reaſon taken captive; but ſpite of intrigue and wickedneſs, Cidalia ſtill retains poſſeſſion of her heart.

Mar. And do you think a reconciliation impracticable?

Mel. I am convinced of it. Neither party complains; each, having impoſed on herſelf an inviolable ſilence reſpecting the cauſe which has diſunited them; therefore, how would it be poſ-

ſible to effect a reconciliation? They indulge no acrimony, no reſentment; but have firmly reſolved never to meet again, and inflexibly repulſed every attempt which has been hitherto made by their friends, in the hope of bringing them together. I, who love them both, have neglected nothing likely to reſtore harmony, and indeed quarrelled twenty times with each, purely from vexation at my ill-ſucceſs: however, at laſt I have given the matter up; and I now clearly perceive that their reſolution is unchangeable: but notwithſtanding this, as you ever ſtood next to the Baroneſs in Cidalia's affection, perhaps you may have better fortune; I wiſh it, but feel little hope.

Mar. I have ſeen them both already, each, called here for a moment yeſterday. The Baroneſs is to come again this morning, and has deſired permiſſion to introduce her ſiſter-in-law. I own, ſuch a third perſon will, to me, be very diſagreeable.

Mel. I ſee, Dorinda in that; ſhe has heard of your friendſhip for Cidalia, and therefore, will not ſuffer a *tête-à-tête* between you and the Baroneſs.

Mar. Well, with all my heart, for I ſhall ſay juſt the ſame before her, as if ſhe were not preſent.

Mel. Since ſhe is unknown to you, I will deſcribe her character minutely. She has what the world calls genius, and *poliſhed manners*; that is, ſhe utters with fluency, the whole ſet of common, trifling, complimentary phraſes, which you were kind enough, formerly, to teach me in a week: added to this, ſhe delights in relating, from time to time, various anecdotes, the ſole zeſt of which conſiſts in throwing ridicule on ſome one preſent. She

ſhews

ſhews every poſſible attention to her acquaintance, and behaves with great politeneſs to all perſons, whoſe conſequence is well eſtabliſhed; but towards every one elſe ſhe affects a diſdain, which ſometimes amounts to the moſt abſurd impertinence. Her connexions are formed neither by her taſte, nor her eſteem; ſhe is only led by intereſt, or the opinion of others. People appear amiable to her, in proportion as they are deemed faſhionable; ſhe is only pleaſed with thoſe who ſhine in company; and whoever does that, will not loſe her favour by any degree of ſtupidity in a *tête-â-tête*. Thus, by the exceſs of an idle vanity, ſhe has renounced that inherent right, of which the moſt diffident perſons cannot be diveſted, the right of judging for themſelves. She is ſaid to be capable of the beſt behaviour, becauſe her time is wholly ſpent in viſiting, or writing notes; and from her capriciouſneſs, is likewiſe reckoned *piquante*: but, in fact, ſhe is a woman of a very common character, whoſe depravity of heart has ſpoiled her underſtanding: ſhe cannot diſcern the value of real merit, admires trifling accompliſhments, is inſenſible to great virtues, and envious of ſuperiority. She has gained, by much intrigue and artifice, ſome partiſans, and the circle of her intimates is very extenſive; but ſhe has made a ſtill larger number of enemies, and is without a ſingle friend on whom ſhe can rely.

Mar. This is a frightful portrait! and yet, unhappily, like more than one original. What a corrupter of the heart is vanity!

Mel. It is a corrupter of vulgar boſoms only, and ſtimulates ſuperiour minds to excellence. The pride of a weak man muſt ever be a blind

and grovelling impulſe; his end is frivolous, his means are deſpicable; while the chagrin he feels at being unable to obtain diſtinction, produces that baſe, that wicked envy, by which he is characterized and puniſhed. But the pride of a wiſe man is enlightened, noble, elevated; and aiming only at great things, it may lead to them, and from the juſtneſs of its views, may often be a ſubſtitute for virtue It puts vice to flight, inſpires beneficence, and places glory in a generous forgiveneſs of injuries: in ſhort, greedy of that admiration which alone is truly flattering, becauſe never granted but to real merit, this man, is impelled to do from mere ambition, what the virtuous practiſe, to gratify the benevolent propenſities beſtowed on them by nature.

Mar. Poſitively you amaze me, dear Melita: abſence has, for theſe three years paſſed, debarred me from the pleaſure of your ſociety; but that time, which I thought ſo tedious, was, by you, moſt judiciouſly employed in mental improvement; and, I own, this converſation ſtrengthens that opinion of your underſtanding, which your letters taught me to conceive.

Mel. Ought ſuch a change to ſurprize, when in your abſence I became a mother?—and what a revolution did that dear name produce in my ſentiments!—it has been worth ten years experience. If you knew how much I already love my little girl, though ſhe cannot underſtand me!—She is the object of every reverie, of every favourite ſcheme; ſhe fixes my attention wholly on the future, by that happineſs which, through her alone, it offers to my view. I will educate her; my child ſhall never leave me. It muſt, therefore, be my aim to qualify myſelf for a due per-

performance of the charge I undertake; and consequently, I learn, read, reflect, and study for my child; I will form her principles and understanding; I will impart to her the fruits of my industry; in short, she shall derive every thing from me: and these pleasing hopes even now compensate for all the pains I have taken, all the sacrifices I have made.

Mar. I perceive, with inexpressible satisfaction, my dear Melita, that you have found the path to happiness; for which, you will no longer search amid the fancied joys of tumultuous dissipation, but henceforth seek it within yourself; and 'tis there, 'tis in your heart, that nature has placed the only true felicity you can find on earth.

SCENE III.

THE MARCHIONESS, MELITA, VICTORINA.

Vict. (*To the Marchioness.*) THE carriage is ready, madam.

Mar. What's o'clock?

Vict. Passed twelve.

Mar. Well, I am going. (*To Melita.*) You dine with me; you'll wait here?

Mel. Yes; and while you are out, I will receive your visits. Don't you except the Baroness?

Mar. Bless me! I do indeed; and perhaps Cidalia may come likewise: she must be shewn up the back stairs lest the Baroness should meet her.

Mel.

Mel. You need not make yourself at all uneasy; I will give proper orders, and talk the affair over with Victorina.

Mar. Adieu, then; I must leave you, but in an hour I shall return. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE IV.

MELITA, VICTORINA.

Mel. LET us wait here, for the first of the two who comes, whether it be Cidalia, or the Baroness, and then give orders about the other. But at present, Victorina, tell me a little, I intreat you, concerning Sweden, your mistress, and the life you led. I am dying with curiosity for a full detail; and yesterday, asked the Marchioness a thousand questions; but she speaks of herself with such reserve that I am only half satisfied. She pretends to have been happy there; happy at Stockholm! and for three years; happy so far off, and for so long a period!—I don't know how to believe it, I own.

Vict. Indeed, madam, she spoke truth; during the whole three years I never saw her out of humour for a moment.

Mel. She has so much fortitude and good-sense!—Still, how was it possible for her to like a country where she had no society but that of Swedes?—and, being unacquainted with their language, she could not understand their conversation.

Vict. The court, almost universally, speak French; and my lady says, virtues and pleasing talents may be found in every country.

Mel.

Mel. But her husband, who, between ourselves, is so jealous, so violent, must have tormented her extremely; for there she was entirely in his power, without friends, without relations. I am sure she suffered cruelly.

Vict. Far otherwise, madam. My master was so deeply penetrated by the sacrifice she made, in leaving Paris and her family, that he became, from gratitude, an altered man; and my lady completed her conquest over him, during our stay in Sweden, by her sweetness and evenness of temper, by the charming manner in which she did the honours of her house, but above all, by never seeming, for a moment, to think the time passed heavily, or to repent the step she had taken. In short, my master now treats her with as much esteem and confidence, as he formerly did with passion and distrust; nay, it is his constant study to make her happy.

Mel. Observe what we gain by cheerfully performing our duty; interiour peace, with the admiration of that world, which, though it often draws us into evil, never fails to bestow applause on merit.—But I hear the rattle of a carriage; 'tis the Baroness, no doubt; and upon consideration, as she is to bring her sister-in-law, I shall not care to see her: do you stay here, and desire her to wait; mean while, I will go into the Marchioness's dressing-room, and receive Cidalia there, if she comes. Does not the back staircase communicate with the wardrobe?

Vict. Yes, madam.

Mel. Very well. *(She goes out.)*

Vict. What precautions are now used to keep two persons apart, who were once so happy in being together! What changes may occur in three years!—

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[illegible]e passionately, must be likewise capable of [illegible]ting with violence.

Bar. True strength of mind, which flows from [illegible]reatness of soul, consists in vanquishing, not in [illegible]ing governed by our passions. I consider hatred [illegible] revenge as disgraceful and criminal failings. [illegible]oe to that man who prides himself in knowing [illegible]ow to hate! he at the same time shews the [illegible]regularity of his mind, and the blackness of his [illegible]ul. What, should we applaud ourselves for encouraging an odious sentiment which torments and destroys us? should we suffer our thoughts to be engrossed by the unhappy object who excites it, that we may wish him nothing but evil, that we may never speak of him, but in a disadvantageous manner, that we may lament his successes, and enjoy his faults and afflictions?—Oh, heaven! can a heart, abandoned to these vile impulses, taste a moment's repose? and is it not equally base and inhuman?

Dor. The savage hatred you describe, strikes me with horrour; nor have I any conception of it: I spoke of that which belongs to generous minds.

Bar. They know it not: and believe me, the picture I have drawn of hatred, is not too highly coloured; nay, I could add traits still more disgustful, by representing those excesses into which we may be hurried by the thirst of vengeance it inspires.

Dor. Oh, you will find no difficulty in persuading me that hatred ought to be subdued by virtue; and that it is incompatible with sensibility. I have enemies, yet hate no one: and I acknowledge, it was without much reflexion that I repeated all those *common-place things* which are said

concerr

concerning hatred; they were neither dictated by my heart, nor my underſtanding, but by the world.

ar. Vice, as well as virtue, has many maxims which paſs current; but you poſſeſs too large a portion of ſenſe and integrity, to adopt thoſe pernicious ſentences, which, though they dazzle fools and embolden wickedneſs, are, by good fortune, ſo apparently wrong, that the ſlighteſt examination of reaſon is ſufficient to demonſtrate their infamy, and arm us againſt the danger accruing from their frequent repetition.

Dor. It certainly behoves us all, ere we adopt a maxim, to conſider and examine it with the utmoſt care; and is eſpecially incumbent upon thoſe who live in the great world, where ill principle neceſſarily abounds, being ſown by wickedneſs, reaped and ſpread abroad by levity. But let us return to the Marchioneſs; what will you ſay to her?

Bar. Not a ſyllable, reſpecting the motives for my breach with Cidalia.

Dor. That's right; no particulars; I highly approve this generoſity; it breathes the very ſpirit of my ſoul, and is, as you know, what I ever have adviſed: yet, depend upon it, Cidalia has traduced you to the Marchioneſs; therefore, in ſuch a ſituation, I would not pique myſelf upon ſcreening her, as you have hitherto done, but rather ſay, I had the moſt ſubſtantial grounds for complaint.

Bar. No, I will not expoſe a perſon whom I once held ſo dear; to chaſe away the eſteem of her only remaining friend, would be a pitiful revenge, beneath my character. What a triumph it is to our enemies, if by their injurious treatment, they

they can hurry us beyond the bounds of equity and moderation, and prompt us to imitate the very deed, which brings disgrace on them!—Alas! if it be possible that Cidalia hates, at least, she can't despise me; I will not act unworthy of myself, for it is gratifying to think I deserve to be regretted by the friend who has proved false.

Dor. How great must her ascendency have been, since, even now, you cannot mention her without dissolving into tenderness! This is inconceivable.

Bar. Can we be otherwise affected towards an object whom we have loved ten years? She is not what I thought, 'tis true; but, spite of her faults, does it not become me always to respect in her the friend of my choice? the friend, in whom I reposed unbounded confidence, and to whom, for so long a time, I owed the happiness of my life?—Permit me to start a question: if, for some heinous misdemeanour, we were constrained to quarrel with a brother, to separate from an husband, could we, with any shew of decorum, traduce those relations in the world, expose their wickedness, and give ourselves a liberty to paint them in the blackest colours? Surely not; for the most indelicate mind would be disgusted by such a mode of conduct. And why should not friendship, that voluntary tie, that band, so pleasing, and so pure, why should it not demand an equal share of caution?—Let us cease to call it a *sacred union*, a *sublime sentiment*, or learn better to know the extent of those duties it enjoins.

Dor. Such principles, are by no means new to me. What sacrifices have I not made to friendship! I dare aver, that *my feelings* are not of the vulgar sort.—*I have had my trials:* but I confess, towards

towards Cidalia, I bear ſuch animoſity as really aſtoniſhes me; for no injuries offered to myſelf, ever inſpired the like; ſo it ſeems that people muſt attack my friends, to excite my reſentment. Were I the object of Cidalia's averſion, you would only perceive forbearance and generoſity in me; but ſhe deteſts you, and that I cannot pardon.

Bar. She deteſts me!—no, do not think it. No, a fatal jealouſy, an unhappy paſſion may have miſled her; but I am confident ſhe cannot hate me.—Recollect the anxiety ſhe ſhewed, but three months ſince, during my laſt illneſs; ſhe came every day to my anti-chamber, nay, paſſed two whole nights there; and my attendants ſaw her bathed in tears, ſpite of the efforts ſhe exerted to conceal them:—every moment, her heart betrayed her—and when informed that I was out of danger, the joy, the extaſy ſhe felt, cauſed ſuch a revolution, as made her ill likewiſe.

Dor. I remember all theſe circumſtances, and I have too much frankneſs to conceal from you, that throughout the whole of her conduct I diſcovered nothing but a diſguſtful duplicity, at which my brother's indignation was equal to my own: and, I alſo recollect, that when you were recovering, you wrote to her, and requeſted an interview; (for your boſom glowed with ardour to ſee her, and be reconciled) but ſhe returned a negative. Did not this belie all her former empty proteſtations of tenderneſs? was it not tacitly confeſſing, that ſhe merely played a farce to impoſe upon the world, and make herſelf appear amiable?

Bar. No, her ſollicitude for me was ſincere: ſhe avoided my ſight from the dread of an explanation; and her refuſal only proved to me, that

that ſhe knew the impoſſibility of juſtifying herſelf.

Dor. Still, ſhe might reaſonably have expected to deceive you again; ſhe reckoned too much on your penetration, and too little on your heart. But *à propos* of her, I was told a moſt extraordinary piece of news this morning; ſhe is going to make a match for her brother, and you will never gueſs with whom.

Bar. Do tell me.

Dor. The daughter of a man, who owes his fortune to you; a man, to whom, by your intereſt, you rendered the moſt eſſential ſervices two years ago.

Bar. M. de Sainval?

Dor. The ſame. You know Cidalia always piqued herſelf on having the livelieſt affection for her brother; you likewiſe know the romantick turn ſhe can give to every thing which concerns herſelf; ſo now, ſhe declares his happineſs, and conſequently her own, to be wound up in this connexion; ſays, he entertains the moſt conſtant and tender of paſſions for that young lady.—Then come minute details, moving expreſſions.—A happy brother.—A charming ſiſter-in-law.—The felicity of finding a friend in her brother's wife.—The joy to be derived from his children, who will become hers. In ſhort ſhe exhauſts with pathetick energy, every common-place ſaying upon the beloved ties which ſubſiſt between brothers and ſiſters, ſiſters-in-law, children, nephews.—You underſtand?

Bar. But the foundation of all this, appears, to me, very natural. M. de Sainval's daughter is indeed a charming girl, in perſon, talents, and diſpoſition.

Dor.

Dor. Beſides, ſhe will have upwards of four thouſand a year.

Bar. I ſuppoſe Cidalia is ignorant of the friendſhip which ſubſiſts between M. de Sainval and me?

Dor. No, ſhe is apprized of it, although it was not formed till after your quarrel with her: nay, ſhe aſſerted the other day, before twenty perſons, that a grand obſtacle impeded the marriage; but, nevertheleſs, ſhe imagined M. de Sainval would, upon reflexion, deem it more adviſeable, in ſuch a matter, to conſult his daughter's wiſhes, than your private reſentments.

Bar. You muſt be miſinformed; were Cidalia capable of ſo low a ſurmiſe, ſhe has too much good ſenſe to acknowledge it.

Dor. She poſſeſſes a far greater portion of ſubtlety, than underſtanding; and has committed blunders of this kind, infinitely more palpable. I have not told you all I know upon the ſubject.—I ſpare your weakneſs, and reſpect your prejudice.—Beſides, there are things of ſo black a dye, that I ſhould be unwilling to repeat them. I have more diſcretion and forbearance than you imagine—but ſhe is a dangerous woman, reſt aſſured of that.—I own, ſhe is engaging; her manners are ſoft and graceful, her way of ſpeaking elevated, though rather too ſententious; yet this very fault gives her an appearance of penetration and ſolidity, which deceives the world; and though it inſpires *ennui*, it, at the ſame time, attracts reſpect.—Being unable to ſhine from brilliancy of wit, ſhe endeavours to win regard by ſtrength of judgment, and adds to this art, that of diſguiſing under an intereſting exteriour, the moſt profound diſſimulation, joined to a frigid and vindictive

ſpirit.

ſpirit. But to revert to the trait I mentioned concerning Sainval; aſk your huſband, when he returns, if it be an untruth; for I was aſſured, that many of his friends were preſent during the converſation.

Bar. And could I be ſo deeply injured by Cidalia?—If ſhe uttered what you ſay, it was ſo much the more culpable, becauſe ſhe cannot think it, I am certain.—But let us change the topick, ſiſter, I beſeech you; and never mention her to me again.—Say, is not your brother coming back from the country to-day?—Has he written to you?

Dor. No, I am even ignorant of his abode.

Bar. And I equally ſo. Think of his going away ſo precipitately without giving me the ſlighteſt warning!—Think of his being abſent near a fortnight, without deſigning to write me a ſingle line!—Alas, I am happy in no inſtance!

Dor. He will certainly return very ſoon.

Bar. Really, his affairs ſhould recall him; they are in ſuch confuſion!—Do you know whether M. de Sainval is at Paris? for as I arrived rather late from the country yeſterday, I did not ſend to his houſe.

Dor. Yes, he came to pay you a viſit; but you were with the Marchioneſs, therefore, I received him.

Bar. Don't I hear a carriage drive into the court?—probably 'tis the Marchioneſs.

Dor. She makes us dance attendance ſomewhat too long.—Come you muſt introduce me.—I feel a curioſity to ſee her. They ſay, ſhe is ſo vain of having been in Sweden! ſo proud of having accompanied her huſband!—Theſe fine ſenti-

mental ladies always exalt their mere duties into ſacrifices. This is ſtrange.

Bar. And is it not a ſacrifice, to tear ourſelves from the arms of a beloved family, by whom we are adored?—But ſomebody is coming; 'tis ſhe.

SCENE VI.

DORINDA, THE BARONESS, THE MARCHIONESS.

Mar. I AM quite ſhocked at returning ſo late;—but I was obliged to wait for my mother. (*To Dorinda.*) I rely upon the Baroneſs's former indulgence, therefore, 'tis to you only, madam, I ſhould addreſs my excuſes.

Dor. I participate in all my ſiſter's ſentiments; and flatter myſelf, madam, you will be kind enough, henceforward, to treat us both alike.

Mar. As you forbid ceremony, madam, you will allow me to converſe with the Baroneſs upon a matter, in which I am inexpreſſibly intereſted; ſhe knows the warmth of my attachment for Cidalia, and—

Bar. I foreſee your queſtions, I will anſwer them, and, ſo far as may be, open my heart. Reaſons, which I will not, ought not to divulge, have ſeparated me for ever from a friend whom I regret, but cannot regain. I do not accuſe Cidalia, I only complain of my deſtiny—and be contented with knowing that your friendſhip towards her, ſo far from diminiſhing mine for you, will ſerve to augment the eſteem with which you have

have inſpired me, by confirming my opinion of your ſteadineſs. But aſk no more; further than this, I preſcribe to myſelf an inviolable ſilence.

Mar. Such mildneſs, and generous forbearance, do not ſurprize me in you: but how comes it that Cidalia, notwithſtanding your extreme caution, ſhould be ſo cruelly, ſo univerſally defamed, by the hardeſt interpretations, the moſt horrid calumnies? When you do not complain, who has a right to accuſe her?

Bar. I am unacquainted with the ſource of reports, which are equally groundleſs and vilifying; however, ſcandal has not, I know, been leſs buſy with me.

Dor. We cannot hinder people from conjecturing, nay judging by the appearances they think they have diſcovered; or from their own ſuppoſitions.

Mar. Appearances!—Thoſe who know Cidalia, and are not blinded either by envy or hatred, find no *appearance* of her being capable of falſehood and perfidy.

Dor. Cidalia's enemies ſay ſhe is in fault, while my ſiſter's, juſtify Cidalia. I ſee nothing in all this, but what is perfectly common.

Mar. Cidalia, madam, is ſo much the more eaſily defamed, becauſe ſhe and her friends are incapable of retaliation; and I can aſſure you, every body agrees in pitying the Baroneſs.

Bar. Then, you conſtrue my forbearance into mere cunning?

Mar. What, my dear Baroneſs, can you admit the thought?—No, I accuſe thoſe only, who, under the maſk of friendſhip, deceive and betray you; ſince, far from imitating your generoſity, they avail themſelves of your name, in order to

gratify their private malice, by blackening and calumniating a perſon, who is too noble to oppoſe ſuch wrongs with any thing but ſcorn and ſilence.

Dor. Theſe harangues are no novelty to me, madam; I recollect to have heard them before. Cidalia has communicated her warmth to you; and this violent attack dictated, no doubt, by her, proves how ſtrictly ſhe obſerves that high-prized ſilence you have vaunted.

Mar. I do not ſpeak after Cidalia, Madam; and, to remove all ideas of this ſort from your mind, know that I am indebted to my mother and Melita, for theſe melancholy particulars.

Bar. Change the diſcourſe, I conjure you—

Mar. Yes, upon condition, that we reſume it; for I wiſh to acquaint you with the villainy of thoſe pretended friends who ſecretly incenſe you—

Dor. (*Angrily.*) Hah! this is too much, madam—ſuch an aſperſion cannot be tolerated.—This total neglect of all decorum was not to be conceived, nor is it to be borne.

March. (*Coldly.*) You aſtoniſh me, madam.—What can I have ſaid, juſtly to incur your diſpleaſure?—Does then every attempt towards the detection of falſehood and treachery, give you offence?—Henceforward, madam, being better informed, I ſhall not fail in my attentions to this point, the indiſpenſable obligation to which, I knew not, though you claim it, doubtleſs, with reaſon.

Dor. (*To the Baroneſs.*) See, ſiſter, ſee to what I am expoſed by my friendſhip for you! But ſince provoked with ſo little caution, I will not heſitate to explain myſelf in that ingenuous manner

ner natural to my disposition. (*To the Marchioness.*) There is no treachery in this business, madam, save on the part of Cidalia; no blindness, but in her remaining friends—

Bar. Sister, what are you saying?

Dor. Yes, madam, I despise Cidalia, and exhort my sister never to see her more. I will not betray the secrets intrusted to me; I will not unveil those enormities of which I have seen the most flagrant proofs—

Bar. Sister!—

Dor. I admire the Baroness's generosity and moderation; but I cannot bear to hear her accused of weakness and injustice, and to see myself undeservedly affronted. You, madam, have compelled me to break silence; and, if I expose Cidalia, blame yourself alone.

Bar. (*To the Marchioness.*) She is misled by vehemence and anger.—I disavow all her assertions.—Pardon me, sister—but the natural warmth of your temper, added to your regard for me, has certainly occasioned this dreadful outrage, which you yourself will condemn, on a little reflexion.—(*To the Marchioness.*) Passion suspends the use of her understanding.—No, there is nothing with which I reproach Cidalia; and I alone should be credited.—In what a dreadful scene have you both involved me!—Can I possess your love, when each gives poignancy to my afflictions?—Alas, if there is not one heart existing on which I may rely, at least, spare and respect in me, the most wretched of human beings!

Mar. You wretched!—with a soul thus tender and exalted, can that be?—Indeed, you merit real friends; and heaven has preserved them for you, spite of yourself.—Time will restore the

jewel you have loſt. Yes, I dare propheſy that it will re-unite two hearts, ſo exactly formed for each other. But who comes to interrupt us?

SCENE VII.

DORINDA, THE BARONESS, THE MARCHIONESS, VICTORINA.

Mar. WHAT do you want?

Vict. A perſon enquires for my lady in her dreſſing-room. (*In a low voice.*) 'Tis madame Cidalia.

Mar. Very well, you may go.

[*Victorina goes out.*

Bar. I take my leave—

Mar. Then, permit me to ſee you again this evening—and if you reject my mediation, at leaſt, diſdain not the ſollicitude of that lively friendſhip which I have conſecrated to you.

Bar. Your friendſhip is ſtill dear to me; and I feel that it has power to ſoften my afflictions.

[*They embrace.*

Dor. (*Aſide.*) I am quite exaſperated! (*Aloud.*) Come, ſiſter, are you going?

Bar. I will follow you. (*The Baroneſs and Dorinda go out: the Marchioneſs attends them a few paces and then returns.*

Mar. (*Alone, after a ſhort ſilence.*) What an interview!—it has wrung my very heart!—Unhappy Baroneſs!—How ſhe is deceived and tyrannized over, by that wicked woman!—But let me go to Cidalia.—Oh, here ſhe is.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

THE MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA.

Mar. I WAS coming to you.

Cid. Victorina informed me of the Baroness's departure, and I came hither immediately. Well, my dear friend, how did you think she looked?—People say she is much altered.—Did she mention me? Dorinda was with her; how could she contain herself before you? In short, what passed during the conversation?

Mar. All these questions, on your part, give me infinite pleasure; they lead me to hope, that you are inclined to be far more confiding than I had ventured to expect.

Cid. I certainly shall not treat you with that strict reserve which, hitherto, I have most sacredly maintained. You shall know every thing I am at liberty to tell, without infringing the obligations imposed on me by delicacy.

Mar. And yet, the strength of my regard for you demands unbounded confidence.

Cid. I will explain the motives which must compel me to restriction; and you will approve them, I am certain. Ah! believe me, it will pain my heart to unburden itself by halves only; 'tis so long a time since all its griefs have been dissembled; and this constraint has most cruelly augmented their bitterness!—But I hear Melita's voice; she comes, no doubt, to call us to dinner.

SCENE IX.

THE MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA, MELITA.

Mel. EXCUSE me if I interrupt; but do you know 'tis three o'clock?

Mar. Come, then, my dear Cidalia—

Mel. Stop one moment—tell me what you have been saying to Dorinda; she went away in an absolute fury, and exhibited a most extraordinary scene to the poor Baroness on going down the stairs.—Victorina, who gave me this account, overheard a multitude of violent exclamations; and, among others, she maintains that Dorinda frequently said, you had "the most inconceivable impertinence, impertinence beyond a name." Victorina adds, that the Baroness vainly endeavoured to silence her sister, who only grew more loud, while her manner and tone of voice were equally terrifying.

Mar. How truly shocking and hideous a spectacle is that presented by an angry woman who gives the reins to fury!—But dinner waits; let us resume this subject by-and-by.—Come.

[*They go out.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE the First.

THE MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA.

Mar. AT length we are alone, and certain of not being interrupted; therefore gratify my impatience, dear Cidalia.

Cid. I believe, it is needleſs to mention the ſtate of my heart, as my letters muſt have convinced you that I ſtill remain unchanged. The friend, of whom malice has bereaved me, I hold dear as ever. I pity and lament her blindneſs; it has blaſted all my joys: her eſteem is torn from me; but, ſpite of every wrong, mine towards her remains the ſame, and though a good which ſhe deſpiſes, is the only conſolation I have left. How painful muſt it be, when we are compelled to ſcorn an object once beloved! And alas, it is not

leſs afflicting, to be ſuſpected of perfidy by the very perſon on whoſe judgement we moſt firmly relied.

Mar. Then you are convinced of having been calumniated to the Baroneſs?

Cid. I own, I am acquainted with all the particulars of that horrid myſtery, though you are the firſt perſon to whom I have made this confeſſion; and forget not your promiſe of ſtrict ſecrecy. It is before you alone that I can permit myſelf to accuſe the Baroneſs of weakneſs and credulity; and, if you knew what arts were practiſed to deceive her, what ſpecious appearances craftily turned againſt me, you would pardon her, I am confident: beſides, though ſhe ſuſpected the blackeſt treachery on my part, ſtill, ſhe inſtantly ſought a candid explanation, nor loſt the hope that I might poſſibly exculpate myſelf. You know my heart; too haughty to bear the ſhadow of injurious miſtruſt, hers wounded it deeply: while ſhe was ſpeaking, ſurprize and indignation ſtruck me motionleſs, and even baniſhed the deſire of juſtifying myſelf. My ſilence and indifference were conſidered as a tacit avowal of my perfidy and ingratitude; and from that fatal hour we never met again. Previous to this, the loſs of her confidence, added to the embarraſſment ſhe betrayed in my company, had forewarned me of my misfortune; and when ſhe divulged a part of her ſuſpicions, I own, the reſentment which I felt on being ſo cruelly affronted, at firſt induced me to believe that I could not ſeriouſly regret a perſon who was capable of doing me ſo great an injury; therefore, I broke off every thing without reproaches, or complaints, and with a degree of compoſure on which I congratulated myſelf. However,

ever, this fallacious calm proved but of ſhort duration, for I ſoon experienced the full extent of a loſs, to me irreparable.

Mar. I eaſily conceive the effect of your firſt emotion, and that it might prompt you to ſcorn all defence; but ſince then, why have you not ſought the means, by deſiring, nay demanding a freſh explanation?

Cid. So ſtrange is my fate, that the very friendſhip which inſpires that wiſh, compels me not to gratify it.

Mar. Will you explain this riddle?

Cid. In two words. My accuſers are the Baroneſs's huſband and ſiſter-in-law; of whoſe falſehood I poſſeſs, by a ſingular chance, the moſt complete evidence; together with all the particulars of their baſe conſpiracy. I cannot wholly juſtify myſelf to the Baroneſs, without producing this evidence, which would unmaſk two perſons, worthleſs indeed, but to whom ſhe is united by indiſſoluble ties. And ought I, for my own ſake merely, to graft trouble, variance, and hatred, upon the breaſts of an whole family? Ought I to tear a wife from her huſband? Could I have the inhumanity to extirpate every idea which makes her duty pleaſing? Could I ſay, "That man, whom you have loved ſo paſſionately, to whom you have ſacrificed every thing, and are joined for ever; in ſhort, the huſband of your choice, is alike undeſerving, both of your eſteem and affection."—Should you, my dear Marchioneſs, diſcover me in this cruel language? would this be friendſhip, when the extremity of hatred could not inflict more agonizing torture?—Still, at ſuch a price alone, can I be juſtified! Think then, how wretched my ſituation is!

Mar. Alas! what do you tell me? I approve, I admire your conduct, and dare believe I ſhould have done the ſame, ſo ſituated. I am convinced that you only did your duty. But how much are you to be pitied!—Traduced in the opinion of your deareſt friend, and conſtrained to leave her in an errour which you could ſo eaſily deſtroy!—Alas! all my hopes of an immediate reconciliation vaniſh—wickedneſs will remain triumphant. That infamous Dorinda and her brother will continue to applaud their infernal ſtratagems: the thought is inſupportable to me, I own.—How I hate Dorinda!—yes, almoſt as much as I love you.

Cid. And can you compare the ſtrength of friendſhip with that of hatred? Oh, no! a calm, a cold contempt, is the only ſpecies of hatred which becomes generous ſouls, the only one of which they are ſuſceptible. Do we not revenge ourſelves on the wicked, by our ſuperiority over them? They taſte not the delights of friendſhip, nor the mild, the benevolent ſenſations of a tender and exalted heart: they are deprived of a happineſs which we enjoy: but let us avoid the culpable weakneſs of participating their pains, by yielding to thoſe ignominious paſſions with which they are tormented; paſſions only meet for the wicked. Let them hate, let them revenge; but let us be humane, forgiving, uſeful to our fellow-creatures; and we ſhall compel them to envy us, even in the midſt of their moſt flattering ſucceſſes.

Mar. You diſtinguiſh well; hatred is a dreadful frenzy, whoſe exceſs appears eſpecially odious and unnatural in a woman: nevertheleſs, without reaſoning on the point, I would willingly be allowed to hate Dorinda, ſhe is ſo baſe, ſo vil-

lainous!—But why does ſhe abhor and calumniate you ſo violently? Is it from mere wantonneſs; or to ſerve a hidden purpoſe?

Cid. She knows how warmly I oppoſed the Baroneſs's marriage; and that I had influence enough to deter her from the imprudence of giving unreſtricted power over all ſhe poſſeſſed to a worthleſs man, whoſe ſole aim in the connexion was her fortune. It was deemed expedient to remove from the Baroneſs's ear, a perſon who might give her uſeful counſel; therefore, we were ſet at variance; and my friend, faſcinated, deceived, and ſacrificed to the vileſt avarice, has, ſince our eſtrangement, made over all her property, and ſigned her ruin: at leaſt, it is ſo reported in the world; and would to heaven theſe melancholy conjectures were ill-founded!

Mar. Unfortunate woman! ſhe is ſeverely puniſhed for her weakneſs and credulity!

Cid. With ſo much ſenſibility and nobleneſs of ſoul, ſhe merited a different fate!—Though ſhe ſuſpects me of doing her the baſeſt wrongs, ſtill, ſhe makes no complaints; but ever preſerves the tendereſt regard for my welfare. She may be blinded and miſled, but it is impoſſible for animoſity and reſentment to penetrate her boſom. Never did any one poſſeſs in a more eminent degree, thoſe amiable virtues which ſhould always ſhine the moſt conſpicuous characteriſticks of a woman; ſweetneſs, lenity, and moderation. She believes, that I am guilty of the blackeſt falſehood, ſtill, has not only pardoned, but excuſes me in ſecret, I am certain; and thinks of my pretended faults, merely to find reaſons which may leſſen them. Though incapable of ſwerving from her own principles, the deviations of another excite

no impulſe in her breaſt, but that of ſoft compaſſion—and yet, this is the friend whom I have loſt!—What can make me amends?—We both were free, both determined never to form engagements; convenience and choice concurred to unite us; with contiguous lands, and equal fortunes, we had a proſpect of ſpending life together, in that ſtrict intimacy which laſted for ten years. At Paris the ſame houſe contained us; and our ſummers were divided between her eſtate and mine. Accuſtomed to ſee her conſtantly, to intruſt her with my inmoſt thoughts, finding in her every excellency both of head and heart, perſuaded that ſhe loved me entirely, and that no earthly hand could ſever us, my attachment daily acquired freſh vigour, and, at length, became the ruling paſſion of my ſoul; reaſon approved it, nay vanity, (for with what is that not blended?) concurred to augment its power; we were held up as the ſole model of a perfect friendſhip; the world, though prone to doubt the ſincerity of female unions, did juſtice to ours; while I experienced, that general approbation ſtrengthens every virtuous propenſity.

Mar. I cannot renounce the idea of your being re-united.—In ſpite of wickedneſs, in ſpite of fate, you will ever love each other. Come, give up the thought of an explanation, and only conſent to ſee the Baroneſs again.

Cid. I know ſhe would receive me; but could I appear before her without juſtifying myſelf? Could I, when in her ſociety, preſerve ſufficient reſolution to let her remain in errour? and ſuppoſing that ſhe conſented to forgive my imputed faults, would it be poſſible for me to reſiſt opening my heart, a heart ſo little calculated for deception,

and particularly with her? Oh, no! it is only while we are separated that I can maintain this cruel silence, which I ought not, will not be tempted to violate; in her presence I should certainly betray myself; therefore, renounce a plan, altogether impracticable, a plan, which must be very chimerical, or I could not have relinquished it.

Mar. But what can have been invented against you, with the least shadow of probability? I shall never guess: and how the Baroness could suffer herself to be deceived by a falsehood which calumniated you, puzzles me still more, if possible.

Cid. Not all the arts imaginable, joined to the strongest appearances, could prevail further than to fill her mind with doubt; I, alone, confirmed the delusion by refusing to explain myself; and this reserve on my part, was sufficient to establish her suspicions; but from whence they first originated, I cannot tell; for I own, in her place, the like could not have been formed by me; however, she was blinded by a passion, strange to my breast, therefore, I ought to pity, not condemn her. Happy are they, who admit no desires but what are mild and temperate, and know how to guard against every violent emotion! their pleasures will be always unalloyed, their griefs alleviated by reason.

Mar. Indeed, the most laudable sentiment may, from excessive indulgence, become blameable and dangerous, especially in women. The slightest relaxation of principle frequently leads us to dishonour; therefore, we should carefully labour to moderate our inherent vivacity; and, in order to preserve ourselves from every illusion that has power to seduce us, we should constantly reflect

and

and meditate, ſubmitting all our ſentiments to the rigid laws of reaſon, which alone can guide us right: reaſon will tell us, that being formed to live ſubordinate, tranquil, and ſequeſtered, our occupations ſhould be ſedentary, our taſte ſimple; and that modeſty, gentleneſs, and forbearance, are qualities as neceſſary to our comfort as our fame. A woman can only ſhine by diſplaying virtues meet for a philoſopher; ſuch as the love of peace and equity, joined to an abſolute dominion over herſelf. A towering ſpirit ſtimulates men to heroiſm, but precipitates women into dreadful evils; conſequently, every vehement emotion, every tumultuous paſſion, is, in us, an alarming, a fatal weakneſs, to which we cannot yield, without forfeiting our principles, reputation, and happineſs.

Cid. Yes, we are formed for ſenſibility, unmixed with violence; nor ſhould our lot be lamented: to regulate the affections by reaſon's laws, is merely to renounce thoſe errours which engender pain. But how eaſily do I forget myſelf in this pleaſing converſation; nevertheleſs, I am forced to go, as my brother, no doubt, already waits for me at home.

Mar. Should the marriage you meditate take place, it would prove a great conſolation to you?

Cid. It would alleviate every ſorrow; my brother is ſo dear to me!—Yet, I dare not flatter myſelf.—There is ſomebody coming. Adieu! my kind friend.

Mar. 'Tis Melita.

Cid. Good heaven! what agitation ſhe diſcovers.

SCENE

SCENE II.

THE MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA, MELITA.

Mel. ALAS! I have ſad news to tell you—

Mar. Hah!

Mel. The poor Baroneſs muſt be in ſuch diſtreſs!—

Cid. Speak.—What's the matter?

Mel. Her huſband has been abſent for a fortnight; during which time, the cauſe of his departure, and the place of his abode, were both unknown; but now, all is diſcovered.

Cid. Well!—

Mel. He ſet off privately for a ſea-port; embarked, and wrote, when getting under ſail, to the Baroneſs.

Cid. What's his purpoſe?

Mel. He writes, that he is ruined, that he is going to India, and, if unable to repair his fortune, never will be heard of more. What will become of his unhappy wife? abandoned by the man to whom ſhe ſacrificed her all, wholly ignorant of buſineſs, beſet by a throng of creditors, obliged to ſell whatſoever ſhe poſſeſſes; at one ſtroke, bereaved of every thing—

Cid. A friend remains.—Where is ſhe? What will ſhe do? From whom did you learn this afflicting intelligence? are you ſure it may be depended upon?

Mar. (*Embracing Cid.*) I gueſs your thoughts:—I cannot, without emotion, read a heart ſo tender and exalted!

Mel.

Mel. You alone have not the merit of discovering what passes there.

Cid. But once more, dear Melita, are you quite sure of the Baroness's misfortune?

Mel. I, this instant, left a person who was present when she received her husband's fatal letter.

Cid. Unhappy woman!—Suppose I went to her house immediately—the door would be shut against me.—(*To the Marchioness.*) Write to her, my dear friend; tell her, that on my knees I beg a moment's conversation.—Yet, she will undoubtedly refuse it.—What can be done?—I must speak to her, notwithstanding—and speedily.——Oh, for pity's sake, advise me! in my present agitation, I know not the proper means to obtain an interview.

Mar. (*To Cidalia.*) How you tremble!—Sit down, and, if possible, compose yourself. (*Cidalia sits down.*) I'll tell you what occurs to me; let Melita (with whom she is very intimate) go and acquaint her, that I have something of the utmost importance to communicate, and bring her hither.

Cid. Well, be it so—but do not let her know that I am waiting for her, dear Melita; do not even pronounce my name.—She lives in this street: if you make haste, you may return in a quarter of an hour.

Mel. Luckily, my carriage waits below. Adieu! depend upon my zeal and activity. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE

SCENE III.

THE MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA.

Mar. AT laſt, my dear Cidalia, every impediment to your juſtification is removed: the Baroneſs, ſhamefully deſerted by an huſband whom, probably, ſhe will never ſee again, muſt now feel, but too ſenſibly, how little he merited her affection; therefore, you may, without ſcruple, entirely open her eyes.

Cid. Yes, I can, nay ought to do it; for could I preſume, without fully re-eſtabliſhing my innocence, to offer her all the ſuccours of ardent friendſhip? or could ſhe accept them from a perſon, devoid of her eſteem?—Nevertheleſs, I tremble—I paſſionately long to ſee her, and yet dread the meeting.—She is ſo much to be pitied! and the delicacy of noble minds acquires new ſtrength from adverſity. Were I, by an explanation, to aggravate her griefs, perhaps, inflict a wound myſelf—and add to the pain ſhe already ſuffers, that of bluſhing for her wrongs to me—in ſhort, if, ſoured by her unhappy ſituation, ſhe were to deem my behaviour the reſult of oſtentatious generoſity—alas, ſhe would ſadly miſconſtrue my heart! of all her injuries, that would be the cruleſt.—What conflicts I endure!—I almoſt wiſh not to ſee her to-day; and yet, were I as dear to her, as ſhe is to me, I might give her comfort. But, then, I ſteadily oppoſed her marriage; I had the boldneſs, long ſince, to predict ſome of thoſe miſeries which now oppreſs her: ſhe will remember this, I am certain; and my preſence, my ſight alone,

alone, must be, to her, an insupportable reproach: nay, who knows, if she will ever reconcile herself to my company?—How overwhelming are these reflexions!—What step ought I to take?

Mar. You really strive to torment yourself. She never ceased to love you even when led to think you guilty of the highest misdemeanors; therefore, be well assured, that the happiness of regaining such a friend, will compensate all her sufferings.

Cid. But where shall I begin? how open the conversation?—I dare believe, in most instances, my own delicacy might preclude the fear of wounding that of another;—besides, the offers I wish to make are so natural!—Still, I repeat it, she is visited by calamity; and, therefore, will be susceptible, petulant, distrustful: these are the troublesome companions, the constant effects, of adverse fortune; effects which should excite our tendrest compassion; nor can we be too much aware of the caution and respect they merit.—He, who approaches the unfortunate, without feeling a sensation of mingled fear and deference, is neither formed to relieve, nor worthy to console them!—A thought occurs.—If, to spare her delicacy, I began, by asking her a favour? were it imaginary, no matter—but of what kind? that must be considered—Hah! did I not hear a noise?—Perhaps, 'tis she—I am quite overcome. [*She sits down.*

Mar. Positively, I question your being able to speak to her.—How truly you deserve affection!—and I think I may venture, without exaggeration, to assert, that you are as dear to me now, as you will be to the Baroness in a quarter of an hour.—Victorina, what do you want?

SCENE

SCENE IV.

THE MARCHIONESS, CIDALIA, VICTORINA.

Vict. I COME, madam, to acquaint you that the ladies are here.

Cid. Who, Melita and the Baroness?

Vict. Yes, madam.

Cid. Oh, heaven!—(*To the Marchioness.*) Take notice, my dear friend; I am going into your dressing-room, and will signify to Melita, that I wish she would send the Baroness to you; but be careful, when she comes, not to speak of me; and, while you are conversing with her, I will likewise instruct Melita as to the manner in which I would be introduced.

Mar. I understand.—I will say nothing of your being here.

Cid. And even, if she mentions me, lead her to think that I have not been with you since the morning.

Mar. Lose no time—go.

Cid. Adieu!—Victorina, give me your arm; for really I feel such a tremor, such an agitation, that I cannot support myself.

[*She goes out with Victorina.*

SCENE

SCENE V.

THE MARCHIONESS, *alone.*

HOW charming is her character!—What a lesson does her conduct afford!—and how forcibly should this noble pattern operate to make us despise, nay detest, that ill behaviour, those indecent clamours, which all who mix in the world so frequently witness.—Bad examples, are said to be dangerous; yet, on the contrary, it appears to me, that the nearer they are viewed, the greater horrour they excite; and this must be a preservative from the misfortune of resembling them: while the pleasing contemplation of virtue, strikes, interests, and captivates; besides, it is so natural to copy what we admire—Oh, here comes the Baroness.

SCENE VI.

THE MARCHIONESS, THE BARONESS.

The Marchioness, *advancing towards the Baroness.*

PARDON me, my dear Baroness, for having kept you waiting a moment; I was detained by an affair of importance; but, believe me, I most ardently longed to see and assure you, that my heart participates in all your sorrows: honour me with a small degree of confidence, I conjure you.

[*She embraces her.*

Bar.

Bar. (*Coldly.*) Melita said, you had something of the most urgent and interesting nature to communicate—

Mar. I have nothing to mention but your concerns; nor can my thoughts be engrossed by a more interesting subject. Indeed, I should have hastened to you the moment I heard of your misfortunes, but, I confess, I was afraid of meeting your sister-in-law, and I wished to see you alone.

Bar. My calamities are great, it is true; but my fortitude shall equal them: nor will I have recourse to any one; I am confident, the effects I possess, are more than sufficient to discharge my debts. I have already spoken with my steward, who has given me this assurance, which is sufficient to make me easy. As to the privation of fortune, I bear it with an indifference, neither assumed nor surprizing; for it would be despicable indeed, after the losses I have sustained, to sink under one like this.

Mar. I know the elevation, and the sensibility of your soul—

Bar. That sensibility is now but weakness; I will rise above it.

Mar. A great affliction always recalls passed sorrows; and I am certain that Cidalia's image is, at this time, more than ever present to your memory—

Bar. Nothing has hitherto been able to efface it for a single moment; though, indeed, I am grown weary of loving and lamenting the ungrateful.—Abandoned, betrayed, by all whom I held dear, I renounce society, happiness, and friendship; heneceforward, I must only search for peace—Cidalia!—tell her, madam, when you meet

meet each other, tell her, this heart, which ſhe has known ſo tender, now hardened, undeceived, conſecrates itſelf to indifference; purpoſing hereafter to conſult no counſellor but reaſon.—Say, I am calm, freed from deluſion; that I abhor the world, and mean to ſhun its view for ever; and, above every thing, tell her, I have loſt all confidence in friendſhip.—But no, ſpeak not to her of me—that ſhe may forget me, that ſhe may enjoy happineſs, is my laſt wiſh, and it is ſincere.

Mar. She forget you! no, believe it not.—What will become of her, when told of your afflictions? To what an exceſs will ſhe feel them!

Bar. Such, indeed, is my ſituation, that it muſt force pity from my greateſt enemies. But I will not tire you any longer, madam; excuſe the trouble I have already given; it had not been, but for Melita's aſſurance, that you wanted to ſpeak with me on buſineſs.

Mar. What coldneſs you diſcover, my dear Baroneſs! why reject the balm of friendſhip tender as mine?—But thoſe conflicting paſſions, by which you are agitated, riſe too naturally in a ſituation like yours; I do not accuſe your heart.

Bar. Alas! my heart is grown inacceſſible to friendſhip.—No, I pretend not to the happineſs of being beloved; nor am I longer capable of any tender ſentiments. Hatred of life alone remains for me.

Mar. This dark miſanthropy is ſo entirely oppoſite to the ſweetneſs of your diſpoſition, that it muſt ſoon be diſpelled.

Bar. Somebody comes; I will retire.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

THE BARONESS, THE MARCHIONESS, MELITA.

Mel. (*Stopping the Baroness.*) DO ſtay one moment, I have a meſſage for you.

Bar. From whom?

Mel. I foreſee your ſurprize.—I am ſent by Cidalia—

Bar. Cidalia!—What would ſhe have with me?

Mel. She is juſt come; and, on learning that you were here, deſired I would aſk you to grant her a moment's converſation.

Bar. I ſee her!—Oh, I am leſs than ever ſo inclined!—No, madam, I will not ſee her.

Mel. I believe ſhe is ignorant of your misfortunes, for ſhe did not mention them to me: all ſhe ſaid was, that ſhe had a favour to aſk of you; that you could, by a ſingle word, enſure her brother's happineſs; and that ſhe depended ſo much upon your generoſity, as to make the application with confidence—

Bar. She will not find herſelf miſtaken.—But once more let me ſay, I will not ſee her.—Tell her, ſhe may be eaſy as to the ſubject of her requeſt; and that the interview ſhe deſires is wholly needleſs.

Mel. She ſays, ſhe cannot accept a favour from you, unleſs permitted to receive the grant from your own lips.

Mar. My dear Baroneſs, you are too generous not to indulge this delicacy.

Bar.

Bar. Let her write, I will reply; 'tis all I can promiſe.

Mel. See her for one moment, I beſeech you—

Bar. No, I could not ſupport her preſence.—Good heaven! don't I hear her voice?—Oh, Melita! whither have you led me?—All this is a mere plot.—It is my fate to be deceived in every thing! (*She ſits down; the Marchioneſs and Melita, advance towards her; the Marchioneſs takes her hand.*)

Mar. We ſhall be quickly juſtified in your eyes.

Mel. (*Looking towards the door.*) 'Tis ſhe—it is Cidalia; ſhe could not reſiſt her impatience.

Bar. Thus, you force me to ſee her, ſpite of myſelf.—Well, let her come; for, after all, what does it ſignify?—She expects, perhaps, to find me humiliated, fallen—then let her enter, and be undeceived.

Mel. Come, Cidalia—we will go—we will leave them—

Bar. What, do you both deſert me?

Mar. We will ſoon return.—Come.

[*They hurry out.*

Bar. Liſten—They are gone.—How mean a ſtratagem, how unjuſt a compulſion! and to what can it tend?—Hark! ſomebody approaches—'tis Cidalia.—Oh, let me, at leaſt, collect my ſmall remaining ſtock of fortitude!

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

THE BARONESS, CIDALIA.

Cidalia appears, and ſtops. The Baroneſs falls again into a chair, turning her face on the oppoſite ſide to Cidalia.

Cidalia, *aſide, after a ſhort ſilence.*

HOW greatly does her perturbation add to mine!—I dare not advance.

Bar. (*Riſing.*) Well, madam—what have you to ſay?—and from what motive could you deſire this meeting?—If it is in my power to do you any ſervice, would it not have been ſufficient to acquaint me with it?

Cid. I doubt not, madam, but the ſtep which I have taken, as it proves my high opinion of your character, muſt to you be flattering; yet I am ſo far from being mortified by this, that it gives me ſatisfaction.—My heart finds no difficulty in ſhewing you eſteem and confidence.

Bar. Such language cannot fail to ſurprize me.—But finally, madam, to what does it tend?

Cid. My brother paſſionately loves the daughter of M. de Sainval; you have abſolute dominion over her father's mind; I know he is indebted to you for every thing; therefore, madam, one word from you in favour of my brother—

Bar. That word is ſpoken. I ſaw M. de Sainval this morning, who aſſured me he would give his daughter's hand to your brother.

Cid. Oh, heaven!

Bar. Yes, madam, you may banish every fear: M. de Sainval immediately told his daughter, and then went to call upon you, and give you his promise; but you were out, and, as he was informed, did not mean to return till the evening; however, I persuaded him to write you a note, which, on going home, you will find; and in that he assures you of his consent, and presses you to fix the day of marriage. I came from the country but yesterday, and was ignorant of your wishes till this morning, when I instantly took the step which you would have desired.

Cid. What, then I owe my brother's happiness to you!—I can no longer check the transports of my heart!—No, recall your benefits, or give me back your friendship. *(Cidalia approaches to embrace the Baroness, who shrinks back.)*

Bar. My friendship!—You have despised, betrayed it—

Cid. Hear me—

Bar. *(Making an attempt to go.)* I cannot, will not—

Cid. Oh, stay!—

Bar. Forbear these unavailing endeavours.—Formerly, I could have pardoned all—now, the time is passed.

Cid. 'Tis well; I find you cease to love me; yet, in the name of that tender friendship which, for ten years, constituted the happiness of our lives, in the name of a tie, formerly so dear, condescend to grant me one moment's attention!

Bar. I cease to love you! ungrateful woman!—But what have you to say?

Cid. That I was never culpable; that you have been deceived; and that my affection towards you alone deterred me from an eclaircissement.

Bar.

Bar. Is it possible?—But hope not to impose; you too well know your influence over me.

Cid. I have only one thing more to urge.—I can shew the most undeniable proof of my innocence.

Bar. Just heaven!—Yet why this long concealment?

Cid. I respected in my enemies and calumniators, the bands which cemented them to you; I preferred your peace to the felicity of your esteem; this is the extent of my transgressions.

Bar. What do I hear?—Ah, may I believe it?

Cid. (*Drawing a letter from her pocket.*) Found your conviction on the testimony of Dorinda herself; you are acquainted with the hand, read this letter.

Bar. (*After a short pause.*) I will believe you only. (*She throws herself into Cidalia's arms.*)

Cid. Friend of my soul! and have I then regained you?—(*They embrace.*) Is it possible?

Bar. Oh, Cidalia! now life, to me, may once more become valuable.

Cid. Mine, shall be devoted to your service.—But ere we give a loose to these pleasing transports, allow me to prove my innocence. I have subdued your heart, let me convince your reason.

Bar. No, suffer me, at least, to retain the merit of being overcome by tenderness alone.—Though you might have betrayed, still you loved me—all is forgotten.—Let us avoid explanations which are useless and, perhaps, dangerous.—Cidalia, must I make the confession? this heart has exposed itself, spite of my efforts to the contrary; I repent not of it, but would rather forget, nay even pardon, than hear a doubtful justification.

Cid. I will recover all my influence over you; I will again become your sister, guide, nay friend; for that's a title above every other! I come to offer you advice, assistance, consolation; and, if I did not merit your esteem, could I be thus presuming? I accept your favours; my brother's fate was in your hands, and you have made him happy. I enjoy, with rapture, the blissful effect of a generosity which I admire: but, if in my turn I can be useful to you, surely it behoves me to prove that I do not deserve a refusal; then read this letter, I intreat, nay enjoin you.

[*She presents the letter.*

Bar. (*Taking it.*) What would you say?

Cid. Read, I beseech you.—I know that Dorinda and her brother, in the hope of alienating you from me, persuaded you that I was your rival; and that my opposition to your marriage merely arose from jealousy. I know it was likewise said, that I sought to asperse and ruin your character, in the opinion of him whom you loved and had chosen. I neither could nor ought, at that time, to have exculpated myself, therefore you condemned me—

Bar. Just heaven!—

Cid. Dorinda unravels all this dark contrivance in the letter you hold, which was written to her intimate friend, then, my professed enemy; but the wicked are joined together by a brittle chain, and when it snaps, they hold each other in too much contempt for the links ever to be reunited. Dorinda quarrelled with her friend, who, to be revenged, sent me this letter; not doubting but I should shew it to you, in order to expose and ruin a woman, by whom you had been so basely deceived.

Bar.

Bar. Oh, Cidalia!—let me breathe a moment.—By re-eſtabliſhing your innocence, and thus diſplaying your own virtues and the truth, into what a ſtate of humiliation you plunge me!—And could I injure friendſhip to this exceſs?—Could I put faith in calumnies which now appear ſo evidently abſurd?—There wanted nothing but ſelf-reproach to fill the meaſure of my ſorrows; and now that is added, all my courage fails.

[*She ſinks into a chair.*

Cid. Alas! what do I hear!—that you are humiliated, grieved by my innocence?—No, it cannot be. And why do you reproach yourſelf? For a credulity, to which I ſhould certainly have yielded in your place; an unhappy errour, in which your heart never participated. The falſe opinion you were led to form reſpecting me, has only ſerved to diſplay your forbearance, generoſity, and tranſcendent virtue. With cauſe to deſpiſe and abhor me, you buſy yourſelf in promoting my welfare, you enſure my brother's happineſs, you render me every ſervice which could have been expected from a ſiſter, from a friend. What have I done, what can I ever do, to equal ſuch an action?

Bar. And am I not contemptible in your eyes?—Could you ſtill love me, as heretofore?

Cid. As heretofore!—Oh, better, if poſſible!—I cannot live without you—cruel experience has convinced me of it.—What tears have I ſhed!—My dear, my real friend, how large a recompence you owe me!—I have been ſeparated from you for two years—but henceforward nothing ſhall have power to diſunite us: no, we will part no more; for now it is needleſs to diſſemble.

Bar. Are you informed of my misfortunes?

Cid. I know them all.

Bar. Since I regain you, they exist no longer.

Cid. Then farewell disguise; and as you are restored to yourself, and divested of all false delicacy, I trust, you will make no objection, when I desire that you will quit, this very night, your own house for mine, which, together with the whole of my property, must from that hour be common to us both; and likewise, that you will let me have the management of your affairs. Ponder your answer well; remember it can either gratify, or give a wound to friendship; in short, remember that I paused not in accepting benefits from you; and that my offers are but natural and customary, while what you did for me was heroick.

Bar. I commit myself entirely to your guidance; dispose, order, prescribe—

Cid. Ah, now I recognize my friend! now, I really taste felicity!

Bar. No longer, dear Cidalia, do I repine at fortune; the thought of owing every thing to you, will, henceforth, make me happy; you will console this deceived, this tortured heart, friendship will heal its wounds.—Then, I shall once more taste the joys of confidence!—and alas, for how long a period have I buried every grief in my own bosom?—But take back this letter, which I need not read to be convinced of my injustice.

Cid. I do not insist upon your reading it this instant, but keep it, I enjoin you.

Bar. To that I have no objection; and I hope you will allow of my sending Dorinda a copy; I wish for no other revenge.

Cid. I should not be sorry, were she likewise to know, that I had the forbearance to preserve this

this testimony of her guilt unused, for more than eighteen months.

Bar. Oh, my dear, my generous friend, what pain must the effort have cost you! I admire, though I cannot but complain of it; for you permitted me to continue in a fatal errour, which could not ensure my peace, while you deprived me of a friend more valuable than all the world can offer. Yes, Cidalia, misled by excessive delicacy, you gave me up a prey to the ungrateful, who slighted my affection, and betrayed my confidence. What sorrows would one word, single word from you have spared us!

Cid. Let us consign those cruel sorrows to oblivion: you shall find me wholly absorbed by the fond desire, the pleasing hope of making you amends for all your sufferings. But come, my beloved friend, let us rejoin the Marchioness and Melita, and render them partakers in our happiness.

Bar. They will share in it, I am well assured; I long to acquaint them with every thing. Come, my dear Cidalia—Oh, they are here.

SCENE IX. and last.

THE MARCHIONESS, MELITA, THE BARONESS, CIDALIA.

(*The two former run and embrace the two friends.*)

Mar. MY dear Cidalia!—My dear Baroness!—

Mel. All our wishes are accomplished!

Bar. Then, you read our hearts.

Mar. I acknowledge we have been, for near a quarter of an hour, at the door of the saloon; we could not hear, we ventured not to interrupt, but we enjoyed the pleasure of seeing you; nor is it possible for any one to conceive our inexpressible satisfaction when Cidalia embraced you.

Cia. You enjoyed your own work; your generous cares have contributed to re-unite us.

Bar. What a call for gratitude!—can it ever be effaced from my remembrance?—(*Pointing to Cidalia.*) If you knew the full extent of my obligations to that friend, whom you have restored to me—

Cid. And my brother!—my brother's marriage, which is her doing!—She spoke this morning to M. de Sainval, and obtained his consent. At what a time did she interest herself in my happiness!—before our interview—

Bar. And Cidalia, unacquainted with this circumstance, instigated merely by the consideration of my calamities, comes, spite of my ill-usage, my fatal credulity, to give me an asylum, to offer me her fortune: and, that I may be spared the conscious shame in which such an excess of generosity must involve every breast less noble than her own, she begins by soliciting a trivial favour, which she denominates an important service.—Oh, that I were able to describe the art, the delicate attention, by which she reconciled me to myself, or that melting sensibility with which she administered the softest balm of consolation to a heart galled by adversity, and blemished with a numerous train of faults and errours!—No, Cidalia, fruitless are your attempts to veil that superiority which all things tend to discover! But does not the modest lustre of your virtue reflect some

some portion of its light on me? and is not the most delicious of all sensations that of admiring those we love?

Mar. Oh, each of you is worthy of her friend; and such an eulogy comprehends all praise. 'Tis impossible to extol either more judiciously, than by a comparison with the other.

Cid. (*Pointing to the Baroness.*) I have not looken in upon her; I willingly suffered her to say every thing which the enthusiasm of her friendship dictated; for such exaggeration serves, at least, to display that nobleness and lively sensibility, by which she is characterized.—At length, my dear friends, you perceive how happy I am; nothing remains to complete my felicity, but to see my brother, and acquaint him with his good fortune. I cannot separate myself from you; therefore, allow of my inviting him to join us here.

Mar. Come into my room; and while you are writing, I will chat with the Baroness; I have so many questions to ask her!—

Mel. For example, what revenge shall we take of Dorinda?

Bar. You shall know. (*She grasps Cidalia's hand.*) But those who regain a friend like this, my dear Melita, and enjoy the happiness of having such numerous obligations to her, are so completely, so delightfully absorbed by love and gratitude, that they easily forget the wicked and perfidious. No, dear Cidalia, hatred and revenge, shall not disturb the tranquillity of a life which ought to be entirely devoted to tender friendship. No, I will only live for you; nor can any sentiment, of which you are ignorant, henceforth penetrate my bosom.

Cid. Indeed, I deſerve this return; for the attachment which binds me to you, governs my heart, and has ever ruled my deſtiny.

Mar. Come, my charming friends; come, Cidalia, write your note; for I am equally impatient with yourſelf, to ſee your brother and witneſs his felicity.

Cid. Let us delay no longer. [*They go out.*

THE

GOOD MOTHER;

A DRAMA,

OF THREE ACTS.

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

The Countess d'ORSAN.

The Count d'ORSAN, *her husband.*

EMILIA,
AGATHA, } *The Countess's daughters.*
HENRIETTA,

CELIA, *the Countess's sister.*

The Marchioness AURORA, *Celia's daughter.*

Madame DUFRAIGNE, *governess to the Countess's daughters.*

LUCETTA, *the Countess's woman.*

The Count de MONCALDE, *a mute character.*

Several domesticks.

Scene, the Countess's house at Paris.

THE GOOD MOTHER.

Le chef-d'œuvre d'amour-eſt le cœur d'une Mère.

M. Gaillard.

The maſter-piece of love is a mother's heart.

ACT I.

SCENE the Firſt.

The Stage repreſents a Parlour.

MADAME DUFRAIGNE, EMILIA, AGATHA, HENRIETTA.

Emi. WHAT, my dear madam, may we not go to my mother, though 'tis nine o'clock?

M. Du. She is awake, but you cannot ſee her; ſhe is buſy with madame Celia.

Aga.

Aga. How! with my aunt at this hour? that extraordinary: my aunt, who, in general, never gets up till noon!

Hen. Oh, for my part, when I am my own mistress, I shall do like my aunt, and get up late too.

Emi. Really, sister, when blessed with a mother like ours, we ought not to think of following any other example. Could we find a better pattern?

Hen. No, certainly; but I believe 'tis easier to copy my aunt, than mamma; and that makes me waver in my choice.

Emi. It is difficult, no doubt, to reach perfection; but there is a pleasure in forming the design, at least, Henrietta.

Hen. I have not much ambition, I confess; besides, I know 'tis impossible for me ever to be perfect; an't it, governess?

M. Du. That's as it happens.

Hen. *As it happens.*—How?—why this is a very flattering answer.—May I then become perfect?—That seems so comical to me.—Emilia, Agatha, do you hear? My governess does not despair of seeing me perfect. Well, I did not expect it, for my part.

Aga. Such an opinion should encourage you.

Hen. But, perhaps, my governess only said it to make a joke of me.

M. Du. No, quite otherwise; I think so: it is very possible that you may, in time, be good, gentle, amiable, polite; in short, quite perfect.

Hen. Perfect!—Oh, that is too much, I can't think that. My dear governess, let me embrace you.—Perfect!—like my elder sister, like Emilia? Pardon me, Agatha, if I don't quote you—but you

you very well know you are not a vast deal better than I am.

Aga. I at least know that I cannot compare myself with Emilia; yet I love her too much to be jealous.

Emi. By praising me thus, you only prove the excess of your modesty, sister.

Hen. Pretty compliments indeed!—But let us return to my future perfections; another word about that, my dear governess; then, you think I shall be quite a little angel?

M. Du. I repeat to you, mademoiselle, if it happens, I shall feel no surprize.

Hen. But my dear little governess, what is come to you this morning?—You enchant me.

M. Du. 'Tis not that I am blind to your faults: you are most excessively addicted to ridicule; you are indolent, fickle, and giddy-brained, fond of contradicting, backbiting, chattering, and talking at random; in short, it is impossible to find a young lady of thirteen who is more troublesome, absurd, and unsufferable.

Hen. (*Making a very low curtsey.*) This is an exceeding pretty picture; and if like, I am in a fine way to arrive at that perfection you have the goodness to promise me.

M. Du. I did not promise it; I only said we might still hope. You are yet a child, and want of application has even left you far below your age; for you are not above seven years old in point of reason.

Hen. (*Laughing.*) Seven!—I am only seven years old!—Have you made the calculation?—'Tis neither seven and a half, nor eight, but just precisely seven years old.—This is very comical.

M. Du.

M. Du. And such excessive childishness renders all your follies more excusable.

Hen. Surely, for being only seven years old, I claim indulgence. I am glad I know this, however; I shall profit by it.

M. Du. Such childish behaviour retards the opening of your mind: but, if you love your mamma and have common sense, you will reform?

Hen. I love mamma with my whole heart, that's very certain.

Em. Oh, I will answer for that.

Aga. And so will I.

M. Du. If that is—

Hen. If that is!—don't speak so, my dear governess; accuse me of any thing you please but a bad heart.

M. Du. Well then, since you love my lady, you will reform; for you cannot wish to make her unhappy.

Emi. Does not that follow of course?

Hen. Yes, I allow it; this reasoning strikes me.

Aga. Oh, here comes Lucetta; perhaps, mamma inquires for us.

SCENE II.

MADAME DUFRAIGNE, EMILIA, AGATHA, HENRIETTA, LUCETTA.

Emi. WELL, Lucetta, may we go to my mother?

Lu. No, mademoiselle, not yet.

Hen. Bless me, how tedious!

Lu. 'Tis a serious conference, I would answer for that; madame Celia had such an air of business.—Then, my lady and she, are bolted in together.

Hen. Bolted in!

Aga. Bolted in!

Hen. That is quite new.

Lu. Besides, madame Celia was here before my lady waked; and 'tis certain, madame Celia would not get up at eight o'clock for a trifle.

Hen. No, no.—Well, I guess what it is; some story about my cousin.

Lu. The Marchioness Aurora?

Hen. Yes; my aunt is not always satisfied with her; I know that.

Lu. Indeed!

Hen. Oh, yes; my cousin is—stay, that I may think exactly how to call her—my cousin is—a coquette; that's the word.

M. Du. Fie upon it, mademoiselle; do you know of what you accuse your cousin?

Hen. Yes, indeed—a coquette is a woman who puts on a great many affected airs, thinking and wishing, by these means, to captivate every body: 'Tis an exceeding stupid folly, in my notion.

M. Du. You speak very well of coquetry, but very ill of your cousin: is it thus, you should treat an absent lady, who loves you, and to whom you are so nearly related?

Hen. She loves me! not much, I believe—then, she is jealous of my sister Emilia; I have found out that; and so, to provoke her, I always say every thing I know to Emilia's advantage, when she is by.—Besides, governess, she glories in being a coquette; and told pappa so the other day.

M. Du. If she is giddy and imprudent, does it follow that you must be a slanderer? In a word, made-

mademoiselle, I forbid your speaking of her in this manner. Come, let us sit down to the table; and take your work, ladies; for, perhaps, we may wait here half an hour longer. (*They place themselves round the table, and take different little pieces of work out of their bags. Lucetta remains standing behind Emilia's chair.*)

Hen. (*After a long silence, giving a loud rap upon the table.*) Hah! this time I have guessed!

Aga. I declare you frightened me, sister.

M. Du. What is the matter, mademoiselle?

Hen. I know the subject upon which mamma and my aunt are talking.—Emilia, it concerns you.

Emi. Pray, sister, keep your conjectures to yourself.

Hen. Hah, hah! you blush—you understand my meaning.

Lu. (*To Hen.*) But you blush likewise, mademoiselle.

Hen. Still I am right, though; Emilia is going to be married.

Lu. Oh, were that true, what joy it would give to all the family!

Emi. If they love me, can they wish to see my situation changed, when it is now so perfectly happy?

Lu. But we should not lose you, mademoiselle; you would certainly live here; your mamma will never part with you.

Emi. Of this, at least, I am very certain, she is fully sensible that I should be unhappy, not only in another street, but even in any other house than hers.

Hen. (*Pondering; her elbows on the table, and counting with her fingers.*) But to whom?—Who

comes

comes here?—let's ſee—M. de Saint-Vallier?—Oh! he is too plain.—M. de Ponteran?—he is very gloomy—beſides, he is an old batchelor, and at leaſt five and thirty.—M. de Bleville?—he wears a wig.—M. de Creml? he is a widower—I don't love widowers.—M. de Moncalde?—

Aga. For ſhame, ſiſter; a Portugeſe, a foreigner!—

Hen. Why you wo'nt let me finiſh; I was going to exclude him, though I am ſorry too; for he is the only one among them who is amiable, ſo mild, ſo gentleman-like an appearance!—with ſuch politeneſs!—How he loves pappa and mamma!—He ſpeaks ſo prettily of mamma!—and then I am ſure he is charmed with Emilia; for when ſhe ſings, or plays on the harp, he is quite angry if they make the leaſt little noiſe in the room.—Beſides, he loves my brother Charles, who is ſo like Emilia, better than any of us; and conſtantly has him in his lap.—I ſee all this, without appearing to take notice of any thing.

M. Du. Come, come, mademoiſelle; will you leave off? Is it proper for a young lady to talk thus of matrimony; to endeavour to pry into the ſecrets of her family, and publiſh her ſurmiſes? Really, you have no idea of that diſcretion and modeſty, by which you ought to be diſtinguiſhed.

Hen. My dear governeſs, remember I am but ſeven years old.

M. Du. Do you remember, mademoiſelle, that I deſired you would learn to hold your tongue; and be ſo good as to begin this inſtant. 'Tis that *chatterboxity*, which produces almoſt all kinds of indiſcretion and miſchief; beſides, it ſtrips our ſex of every charm; and, were it poſſible for a

woman

woman of eminent abilities to have this fault, her understanding would not prevent her from being considered as a gossip, equally ridiculous and troublesome.

Hen. (*Aside.*) A very long harangue in praise of silence!—(*Aloud.*) Suffer me to ask one question, governess, 'tis for information; is *chatterboxity* a word in our language?

M. Du. I don't know, mademoiselle; I was not taught by rule, therefore may use wrong phrases; but I will never give you any but right precepts. Dwell not on words, rather confine your attention to things; 'tis a habit I advise you to acquire.

Hen. (*After a short silence, coughing affectedly.*) This is a terrible cough; I am choaking—

Lu. (*Laughing.*) Aye, with impatience to talk.—Oh, will you give me leave to tell the young ladies a story, madame Dufraigne?

Hen. A story! [*They all rise.*

M. Du. Yes, relate it.

Lu. Stay, first look at this ring.

Aga. How pretty!

Lu. It was brought here two days ago, and I was desired to persuade my lady to buy it.

Emi. What's the price?

Lu. They ask but twenty five guineas; and 'tis fairly worth fifty.

Hen. Well, has mamma bought it?

Lu. Oh, no; such excessive cheapness led her to suspect that the ring was stolen, or else that it was the property of some person in great distress for money; so she ordered me to make every possible enquiry about it.

Emi. And what have you learned?

Lu.

Lu. Why, that it really belongs to a lady who comes out of the country, and is now in a sad plight indeed: business brought her hither; she fell sick of a malignant fever, which lasted five whole weeks; she has scarcely begun to recover, and is without money, harrassed by creditors, and in the greatest perplexity. She will not apply to any body; and, while waiting for the assistance she expects from her province, is obliged to sell the ring for bread. This story was the means of my discovering likewise, that there lives, at the same inn with the lady, an old blind woman, whom she used to support, but has now abandoned, through necessity, to the most terrible distress.

Aga. Does mamma know all this?

Lu. Not yet; but I shall tell her as soon as madame Celia is gone.

M. Du. I am very sure of what my mistress will do.

Lu. Oh, yes; that's not difficult to guess.

Emi. How I pity the poor lady, for being obliged to desert that unfortunate blind woman!

M. Du. Indeed, one great reason why we ought to compassionate poverty is, because it prevents our indulging those emotions of humanity, so natural to us all.

Emi. Where does the poor blind woman live?

Lu. Just by—oh, my mistress will undoubtly relieve her.

M. Du. No matter; the young ladies must not be debarred from the pleasure of participating in a good action.

Hen. I will give what I design for her relief to Lucetta, if she will take the charge of it.

Aga.

Aga. And I, likewise.

M. Du. I will imitate your example, ladies, and give also, according to my means.

Lu. So will I too, and willingly.—But there's somebody coming—perhaps, 'tis my lady.

Hen. Oh, no; 'tis my cousin.

Lu. What, the Marchioness Aurora?—Well, I'll go.

Aga. Then you don't think her agreeable, Lucetta?

Lu. No, mademoiselle, quite otherwise.

[*She goes out.*

M. Du. What brings her to us, this morning.

SCENE III.

MADAME DUFRAIGNE, EMILIA, AGATHA, HENRIETTA, THE MARCHIONESS.

(*Madam Dufraigne sits down by the table to work.*)

Mar. OH, here are my cousins.—Good morning, dear Emilia. (*To Agatha.*) Good morning, my love. (*To Henrietta.*) Good morning, my bantling.—Madame Dufraigne, your servant. An't you astonished to see me out before ten o'clock.—Really, it kills me. Guess at what time I went to bed—by day-light, broad day-light!—I lay down but four hours. How comes it that my aunt is not with you? I must speak to her, I positively must; and my uncle is not up yet, as I am told.

Emi.

Emi. No; he went to bed very late last night.

Mar. That's teazing to death; I came here on the most important, the most urgent business; I have an infinity of confidence in my uncle.—Emilia, I am quite in love with your head-dress; it is simple, careless, but exceeding tasty.—Is all that hair your own?

Emi. I never wear false.

Mar. Nor I neither; I detest art.

Hen. Oh, cousin! then scold your woman.

Mar. That frequenly happens; but why do you wish it?

Hen. Because she has dressed you so, that any body would vow you had two false curls of a side.

Mar. No, indeed, 'tis all my own hair.—But tell me, what is your mamma about?

Aga. She is busy with my aunt.

Mar. With my mother?

Aga. Yes.

Mar. That is surprizing—and deranges me excessively; but do you think my mother will come in here with yours?

Aga. I don't know.

Mar. I have a great mind to be gone—I can't tell what I ought to do.—I am afraid of meeting her as I go out.—Come, I'll e'en wait a little longer.—Emilia, you were at the ball last night, and charmingly dressed, as I hear: *à propos*, I beg you will send your mantua-maker to me: your dress did great execution; but people thought you had not *rouge* enough—have you any on now?

Emi. At this hour?—surely you joke.

Aga.

Aga. Besides, she does not even wear it at a ball; her natural complexion is so fine, so lively!

Mar. That's nothing; *rouge* is necessary at a ball; and not to wear it, looks like conceit. I only tell you what people say; for I detest *rouge* myself; 'tis thought I might do without it; but I am so much afraid of affecting singularity!—

Aga. You are married, which makes a difference.

Mar. How goes the harpsichord on, Henrietta?

Hen. Not over and above well, cousin; but 'tis Agatha you must hear, and my sister Emilia on the harp.

Mar. Thanks to my stars, I have been taught nothing; and when forced to educate oneself, there is some merit in not being quite a driv'ler.—I had a genius for musick—an incredible genius.—Yet what's all this good for? I don't see that it makes people at all better thought of in the world; for, provided one is handsome and clever, 'tis very easy to please.

M. Du. (*Aside.*) This discourse takes a dangerous turn. (*Aloud.*) Mademoiselle Henrietta, mademoiselle Agatha, come to me, if you please. I have your books in my bag, and you may read while waiting for my lady.

Hen. And my sister?

M. Du. She is sufficiently formed to converse with the Marchioness; besides, I know mademoiselle Emilia too well not be certain that she will derive infinite advantage from such conversation.

Mar. You do great honour to my principles, madame Dufraigne.

M. Du.

M Du. Not more than they deſerve, madam.

Hen. (*Laughing.*) No, no—

Mar. What do you laugh at, Henrietta?

Hen. Aſk my ſiſters; for I would venture a wager, they have quite as much inclination to laugh.

Emi. She is ſilly.

M. Du. Come, come, ladies. (*They ſeat themſelves, and read.*)

Mar. How old are you, Emilia? an't you in your nineteenth year?

Emi. I was ſeventeen the twelfth of this month.

Mar. Indeed! then I am four years older.—I thought there had been only three years difference between us.—Oh, couſin, how I ſhould like to ſee you married!—'tis high time to think of it.—I was but ſixteen when I married.

Emi. That is not at all ſurprizing; you had a large fortune; I have nothing.

Mar. Aye, two ſiſters, and two brothers, are ſad bars to matrimony.—I fear, my love, you will be under a neceſſity of reſolving to ſettle in the country; at Paris, it ſeems to me impoſſible.—We muſt e'en make the beſt of things—and indeed, if you knew what dangers are to be met with in the great world, that conſideration would conſole you for not being likely to live in it.—When we are pretty and agreeable, we inſpire ſentiments of a moſt troubleſome nature, ſpite of ourſelves.—We are *obſedée*, followed, perſecuted—and then, the jealouſy of a huſband!—the envy of the women!—Ah, you will be very happy in eſcaping all this!—*A propos*, did not the Count de Moncalde dine here yeſterday?

Emi. Yes.

Mar. I don't know how it is, but he has found means to get intimately acquainted with all my relations—I meet him every where. How avoid that, for example?—Poor man!—his head is quite turned—but don't mention it, Emilia, I intreat you.—He is agreeable; besides, I have a great esteem for him; his manners are so elegant! and 'tis very wonderful for a foreigner, a Portugese, to have that perfection.—He told me, the other day, that he now considered France as his native country—I well know the reason why; 'tis a wretched thing.—But my aunt does not come; I cannot wait for her any longer: you'll tell her, cousin, that I shall return. I absolutely must see her to-day. I set off for Versailles after supper; my week begins to morrow. What *ennui!* the very thought wears me to death.

Emi. But I remember the time when you ardently longed for a place; recollect what pains you got my mother to take on the subject.

Mar. Oh, because I had no conception of the insupportable *ennui* produced by such slavery.

Emi. If that slavery be so irksome, what prevents your relinquishing it? I know the persons on whom you depend would willingly acquiesce.

Mar. The persons on whom I depend!—You speak in a very submissive style.

Emi. Are we not dependent on a husband, a mother, a father-in-law?

Mar. What, at one and twenty, after having been married five years?—The moment we go out by ourselves we are dependent on nothing but our own inclination. Perhaps, you think I still want a *chaperon?*

Emi.

Emi. Why—I believe a guide would not be wholly uselefs to you; and according to my opinion we can never ſhake off the authority of a huſband; and ſhould, at all ages, reſpect, cheriſh, and follow the counſels of a mother.

Mar. Your ſyſtem of morality is vaſtly ſublime; true indeed, it does not contain very new ideas.

Emi. No, ſuch principles are common; and too natural, too ſacred, not to be generally received.

Mar. 'Pon honour, you talk moſt raviſhingly fine! nevertheleſs, I adviſe you, if ever you do live in the world, to avoid that little dogmatical ſtyle of expreſſion, at which people might take the liberty to laugh.

Emi. I know the deference due to a married woman, and a perſon older than myſelf; nor did I apprehend there was any want of that, in declaring an opinion which, I am confident, really agrees with your own. Beſides, as I have known you from my childhood, and have the honour of being your relation, I flattered myſelf you would excuſe a liberty which I certainly ſhould not have taken with another. In ſhort, couſin, you may reſt aſſured, that if I ever mix in the great world, I ſhall be ſilent, attentive, and eſpecially careful not to hazard the diſplay of principles which may give an unfavourable impreſſion of my character.

Mar. (*Looking at her watch.*) Bleſs me! 'tis ten o'clock!—Adieu, couſin! I beg you'll tell my aunt I ſhall return.—(*She goes up to the table.*) Adieu, little Henrietta! What's that you are reading my girl?—(*She reads over her ſhoulder.*) *The Hiſtory of France*; how tireſome!—And you

Agatha?—*The Roman History.—(Shrugging up her shoulders.)* Poor things, how I pity you!—Emilia, you know all that by heart I suppose? I congratulate you upon it. As for me, I declare I can't tell in what year Rome was founded; I could not draw the outline of an eye; nor do I know one note of musick; and yet, notwithstanding this profound ignorance, such is the admiration I meet with, such envy do I inspire, that I am able to view the accomplishments and pre-eminence of others, without feeling at all envious myself.—But pursue your studies; 'tis mighty well if they amuse. Adieu! I wish you abundance of pleasure.—Don't disturb yourself, madame Dufraigne—adieu, for the present.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE V.

MADAME DUFRAIGNE, EMILIA, AGATHA, HENRIETTA.

Hen. YES, yes; because she knows nothing herself, she laughs at education; but, for my part, I believe it is still more easy to laugh at ignorance—and then, for her to pretend that she is not envious is a mere jest; one need only see how she always comes round to my sister Emilia.—Well, governess, 'tis odd to be sure, but nobody gives me so strong a desire for knowledge as my cousin does.—Oh, I will never be like her! and that alone shall make me apply immediately.

Emi. I hear my mother's voice.

Aga. Yes, 'tis she and my aunt.

SCENE

SCENE V.

THE COUNTESS, CELIA, EMILIA, AGATHA, HENRIETTA, MADAME DUFRAIGNE.

Countess. (*Her daughters advance to kiss her hand, she embraces them.*) MY children, I shall be unable to give you your lessons this morning; but go into my room, where you will find the maps prepared; and I depute Emilia to fill my place to-day, and to keep school. Agatha, have you practised on the harpsichord?

Aga. Yes, madam.

Hen. And I, I have learned my verses and my history; I have taken my lesson in thorough-bass, I have written two pages; and my governess is extremely well satisfied with me.

Countess. Go into my room, my dears: attend them, madame Dufraigne.

Hen. Good b'y, mamma; good b'y, aunt.

Cel. Give me a kiss, dear Emilia.—How mild, how sensible she looks!—Charming girl!

[*Madame Dufraigne retires with her pupils.*

SCENE VI.

THE COUNTESS, CELIA.

Countess. YES, she is indeed a charming girl.—That interesting and noble figure, that mildness and sensibility of countenance, aptly describe her heart and disposition. Replete with knowledge and accomplishments, praised by all who know her, adored by all who surround her, she does not become vain, but attributes the applauses she receives to education merely: she imagines that every other person, brought up like herself, would possess the same advantages: the encomiums bestowed on her, redouble her gratitude to me; and to me alone she thinks them due; they increase her affection for me, but have no power to kindle pride in her. I know not any one who possesses sounder and stronger judgement: she is ingenuous beyond example, yet, at the same time, perfectly discreet; in short, she unites to these rare, these numerous qualifications, uniform sweetness of temper, with all the candour and pleasing diffidence natural to her age.

Cel. How happy, sister, is your lot; and how different mine!—But it is wrong to envy a blessing we have not deserved. Alas, such a reflexion cruelly augments the bitterness of grief!—I neglected my daughter's education, and my daughter makes me wretched!—but let us only speak of yours, let us only speak of Emilia, for whom I feel almost equal tenderness with yourself.

Countess. Oh, sister, allow me to say, that no degree of tenderness can equal mine towards her!—

and

and, perhaps, I am on the point of ſeparating myſelf for ever from an object ſo ardently beloved!—What you have notified this morning, did not ſurprize me; I foreſaw it; ſtill, I am oppreſſed by the certainty, I acknoweledge: but do not dread my weakneſs, it ſhall be viſible to you alone.—Ah! can we pauſe a moment in ſacrificing every thing to the happineſs of thoſe we love?

Cel. I felt extremely unwilling to charge myſelf with ſuch a propoſal, being aware of the ſtroke I was going to inflict; nevertheleſs, the ſmallneſs of Emilia's fortune, together with the ſplendid advantages of this alliance, determined me to ſpeak—beſides, you alone have the right of giving a refuſal.

Counteſs. And be aſſured I will not abuſe it.

Cel. Are you going to acquaint my brother with this propoſal?

Counteſs. I wait for him; he is coming—alas, to receive a melancholy greeting!

Cel. Your power over him is abſolute; he will only do what you preſcribe.

Counteſs. Indeed, he has kindly left me the ſole diſpoſal of my daughters; and, I flatter myſelf, I ſhall juſtify a confidence ſo dear, ſo gratifying!

Cel. How ſtrongly does your example prove that we are the architects of our own fortune! You were married under the moſt inauſpicious omens; the man to whom you gave your hand, enſlaved by a fatal paſſion, refuſed you his heart; he obeyed the commands of his imperious parents with extreme repugnance; and no ſooner were you united to him, than he had the barbarity to acquaint you with his ſentiments. Every other woman, in your ſituation, would have followed no impulſe but that of anger, ſo juſtly founded: while you liſtened to the voice of duty only, and

received for so doing an adequate reward; as that very man, by whom you were disdained, soon felt the enormity of his errour, lamented it, and made atonement by esteem and respect, which at length amounted to the most lasting attachment and perfect confidence.—But somebody is coming; 'tis he, no doubt; so adieu!—I will return presently to learn the result of your conversation.

Countess. Why should you go already?

Cel. I have business; I must talk to my daughter; she gives me such vexation!—she totally loses herself. I will tell you more in the evening. Your servant.

Countess. If I should want your assistance, where shall I find you?

Cel. At home; I shall not go out, unless it be to come hither. Adieu, till by-and-by, my dear sister. *(She goes out.)*

Countess. *(Alone.)* Emilia, my child!—part with her!—and for ever—for ever!—can I live without her?—But what avails my life, if Emilia be happy?—Somebody comes.—Oh, let me conceal these tears, this weakness!

SCENE VII.

THE COUNTESS, THE COUNT.

in a morning gown.

Countess. PARDON me for disturbing you; but I had business so important to mention—

Count. You alarm me—I see you have been weeping; what's the matter, my love?

Countess.

Countess. I am rather agitated I own; nevertheless, I have nothing melancholy to communicate—on the contrary—

Count. By this emotion, I guess it relates to Emilia—

Countess. You are right—my sister came this morning to propose a match for her.

Count. Well?

Countess. The gentleman who sollicits her hand possesses the advantages of birth and fortune, together with an universal good character; he is thirty, has an agreeable person, and loves Emilia for herself alone, because he even refuses the portion we could give her.

Count. But why are you not transported with joy?—I am all eagerness for his name.

Countess. You know the gentleman; he frequently visits here, and you are extremely partial to him.

Count. Then satisfy my impatience.

Countess. 'Tis the Count de Moncalde.

Count. The Count de Moncalde!—a foreigner!—but, unquestionably, he means to reside in France?

Countess. Alas! he says he will make no engagement of that sort; too sure an implication that he designs returning to his native country.

Count. And could you be tempted to give him your daughter?

Countess. I have known him these five years, and am perfectly well acquainted with his character, than which, none is more virtuous, more valuable: he possesses understanding, accomplishments, sensibility, and learning; is unaffected; has the highest relish for every thing ingenious; in short, he is endued with all the requisites to

make my daughter happy; and ought I to reject his addresses?—Can you think me selfish to that culpable degree?

Count. (*Taking her hand.*) But does it become me to permit a sacrifice which would make you wretched?—Besides, I could not myself resolve to part with Emilia; she is my daughter, and still more, she is your work. In her I see renewed, your genius and your virtues. Oh, no! hope not that I will ever consent to a separation.—I derive such pleasure from the thought of seeing her mix in the world, and enjoying the praises she must receive—how dear will those praises be to me, since owing to your cares!—What, should you have spent the prime of life in her education, to see her cruelly snatched from your arms, from her country? to lose in one instant, the fruit earned by fifteen years of assiduity and labour?

Countess. I laboured for her good, not to gratify my own vanity. Do you consider the smallness of her fortune, togther with the brilliant, nay unhoped for advantages of the alliance proposed to us? A worthy amiable man, whose birth is highly distinguished, whose fortune is immense!—'Tis true, I shall be separated from Emilia, but never forgotten by her; that thought will console me; yes, satisfied with the lot of my child, I can bear all the rest.

Count. But Emilia herself, will she resolve to leave you?

Countess. Reason can mould her to any thing.—The effort will undoubtedly cost her dear; I love to think it will; but, if she likes the person and disposition of the Count de Moncalde, I engage to persuade her to make this sacrifice, however painful

ful it may be.—In ſhort, I conjure you to intruſt me with the care of her happineſs.

Count. Well, ſince you wiſh it, I conſent; 'tis you in fact, my dear, who ought to diſpoſe of her; for could I diſpute an empire which you have acquired by ſuch pains?—I foreſee that you will ſacrifice yourſelf to this beloved object, I ſhould not have your fortitude; but I admire it, and can reſiſt you no longer.—What regrets you are preparing for yourſelf! nay, how ſhall I ſuſtain your ſorrows and my own, your tears, and the loſs of Emilia?

Counteſs. No, do not fear; I will never diſturb your tranquillity with unavailing complaints; could I yield to my own grief, when my greateſt conſolation will be the hope of mitigating yours?

Count. Oh, you alone are all in all to me!—and you know it.—Friendſhip, admiration, gratitude, theſe are the bands by which I am joined to you: the aſcendency you poſſeſs over me, is ſo amply juſtified by your virtues that, far from diſavowing it, I glory in the confeſſion.—To you I am indebted for every thing, my judgement, opinions, principles, and happineſs. I find in you the moſt amiable and indulgent of friends, the wiſeſt of counſellors: be then, at all times, the arbiteſs of our children's fate, as you are of mine.—But let us, at leaſt, uſe every poſſible endeavour to induce the Count de Moncalde to ſettle in France.—He ſeemed ſo much affected by your tenderneſs for Emilia, he diſcovered ſo ſincere an attachment to you!—how can he think of ſeparating your daughter from you?—I cannot believe he will be inflexible in that reſpect.

Countess. No, let us not flatter ourselves: he is of a steady resolute temper, and has positively assured my sister that it was to no purpose to attempt imposing on him the condition of settling in France, for to this, he could not submit. He is firmly resolved on returning to Portugal, you may be certain of it.

Count. Alas, how you afflict me!—nevertheless, I once more declare, that Emilia's fate is in your hands; and whatsoever I may suffer, I leave you absolute mistress of it; nor shall any thing induce me to retract. Do you think of talking with her to day?

Countess. Yes, after dinner.—But 'tis late; we must dress—nor have I yet seen my sons, let us go to their apartment.

Count. I wanted to consult you on a matter relative to them; I am dissatisfied with their tutor; another has been proposed to me, whom I could wish you to see; 'tis said, he speaks English perfectly well; but of that I cannot judge.

Countess. I will tell you if he really understands it—

Count. How!—why you never learned English?

Countess. Excuse me; I have been learning it for this year passed, that I might be able to teach Henrietta, who desired me to let her have an English master: but masters, in general, are so negligent!—two years instruction from them is not worth three months from a mother.

Count. What a character is yours!—Thus you are determined, 'till your children are settled in the world, to spend a portion of your time with masters; devoting one half of your life to the acquirement,

ment, and the other to the communication of knowledge.—But what am I saying? for amidst these numerous cares and employments, and while thus multiplying your duties, you still find leisure for society and friendship.—How is this?

Countess. We always find sufficient leisure to fulfil those duties which are pleasing to us.

Count. I confess, you continually astonish me.—If you are not blessed in your children, what mother can expect so to be?—Yet, our amiable Emilia will be lost to you.—The very thought is dreadful—I cannot support it.—Shall you see your sister again to-day, and give her your answer to the Count de Moncalde?

Countess. He desires a speedy one; and, since I have your permission, shall receive it as soon as I know Emilia's inclinations.

Count. Emilia will reject this offer, I am confident.

Countess. I think as you do; but if her heart be not averse to the Count de Moncalde, if she feels for him that esteem he merits, is it not sufficient?

Count. Come, we must make this sacrifice, I perceive.—Speak to your daughter, speak to her when I am absent; the conversation would be too much for me; I should destroy your work, I feel it but too well.—*A propos*, do tell me, is your niece informed of this affair?

Countess. No, entirely ignorant.

Count. She came to enquire for me twice this morning, before I was up; what can she want?

Countess. Why, are you not her confident?

Count. Yes, sometimes; she acquaints me with all the tender declarations she receives; names the persons who are dying for her, and asks my advice.

vice. I reply, that ſhe is pretty and would turn my head, were I fifteen years younger; while ſhe, enchanted with our converſations, affirms to every body that I have abundance of diſcernment and good ſenſe.

Counteſs. You would do far better by really giving her advice; of which ſhe ſtands ſo much in need!

Count. If I ſpoke rationally ſhe would not liſten; nor am I at all obliged by her pretended confidence, as I owe it merely to her ridiculous vanity.—But, talking of her, I remember ſhe left word that ſhe would return: I will give an order to prevent her admiſſion, for I am by no means diſpoſed to reliſh her diſcourſe at preſent. Will you go and ſee the children?

Counteſs. Yes, with pleaſure.

Count. Come, my love. (*He gives her his arm, and they go out.*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE the First.

LUCETTA, HENRIETTA.

Hen. WELL, Lucetta—finish the story of the ring; have you returned it to that poor lady?

Lu. Yes, with fifteen guineas, which my mistress has lent her.

Hen. Fifteen guineas!—I am very glad of it—and the blind woman?

Lu. My lady has given her six guineas.

Hen. Oh, well, I'll give her something likewise.—I have got two guineas, I will send her half.—I shall take after mamma, and love to give.

Lu. Aye, but my mistress never gives away any thing which does not cost her the sacrifice of a superfluity; that alone is being truly generous.

Hen.

Hen. Still, I am very fond of superfluities too—nothing else is pretty. Oh, here comes mamma.

SCENE II.

THE COUNTESS, EMILIA, AGATHA, HENRIETTA, LUCETTA.

Hen. MAMMA, mamma, pray let me give a guinea to the poor blind woman?

Countess. With all my heart; your sisters have desired the same permission: Emilia gives three guineas, and Agatha two; but I forewarn you that each of us, by giving, has made a sacrifice; I, in relinquishing a picture; Emilia, a pocket-book; Agatha, a hat; and I hope, Henrietta, you will do like us.—

Hen. But I have no sacrifice to make, mamma; I have no wish for any thing.

Countess. I think you expressed an intention, yesterday, of purchasing a very pretty desk, which we saw at a shop.

Hen. Ah, that's true—but I shall have one guinea left; the desk is only to cost thirty shillings, Emilia will lend me nine, so I can buy it just the same.

Countess. What, would you have recourse to borrowing, for the sake of a *bagatelle* you may so easily dispense with?—Besides, we must never run in debt; or, at least, not without an absolute necessity. Were you devoid of a good heart, I could not give you that; but to reason justly, I have the power of teaching. If, for the accomplishment of a benevolent action, we retrench in none of our

our usual expences, we are but guilty of a weakness; if we borrow with one hand to bestow with the other, we embarrass our finances, and usurp the name of beneficence; for without equity there can be no virtue:—govern yourself by this rule; 'tis all I have any right to demand; either buy the desk, or relieve the poor woman; but never pretend to unite the pleasure of gratifying all your fancies with the happiness of alleviating distress; that is impossible.

Hen. If a choice must be made, I certainly will not hesitate, but give up the desk with all my heart.

Countess. Then the act will be meritorious, from costing you a self denial; and, devoid of that, in what would its value consist?

Hen. I feel all you say, dear mamma; and every time I wish for my desk, I will think of the poor blind woman, and I shall then wish no longer.

Countess. You may even say to yourself: "If I had not been compassionate, I might have possessed a desk, which now I should cease to care about; whereas, instead of that, I still enjoy the remembrance of a good action, for which a poor and virtuous woman blesses me, and mamma loves me the better." [*She embraces her.*

Hen. Oh, mamma! be assured, from this moment I cease to regret the desk; and find what I at first thought a sacrifice, turns out none at all.

Countess. 'Tis the same with all self-denials required by propriety; they are only painful before the execution; while projecting them, we think of nothing but the struggle they may cost us; but that honest pride which arises from the performance,

formance, is in itself a sufficient compensation; though you, my dear Henrietta, will, I hope, enjoy a far more pleasing reward, that which results from sensibility. But go with Agatha, and join your governess. Emilia, do you stay here.

Emi. There is somebody coming.

Aga. 'Tis my cousin.

Countess. (*Aside.*) How troublesome!—(*Aloud.*) Retire, my children. When my niece leaves me, do you return, Emilia.—Go, my dear.

[*They go out.*

SCENE III.

THE COUNTESS, THE MARCHIONESS.

Countess. (*Aside.*) WHAT has she to say? How disagreeable is this visit, in my present situation!

Mar. So Aunt, at last, I do find you:—I have need of your friendship, your advice!

Countess. My advice!—you amaze me: I thought that, could never do you service, as it has been disdained for so long a time: but no matter, speak; if I can be useful to you, depend on my assistance.

Mar. Indeed aunt, towards you I have behaved very ill; I am fickle and inconsiderate; but you are so good! my repentance is so sincere! I am disposed to a confidence so unbounded!—

Countess. On what subject pray?

Mar. I am in the most cruel situation imaginable.—I will hide nothing from you; I will not try to lessen my faults; besides, I detest artifice: my greatest defect is that of being unable to dissemble;

ſemble; every thing I feel is painted on my countenance, ſpite of all my endeavours to the contrary—

Counteſs. Let us come to the point, I intreat you.

Mar. Aunt, you ſee me in deſpair. I am perſecuted by my relations, in the moſt unparalleled manner, and deteſted by my ſiſters-in-law, who have undone me in the opinion of their father.

Counteſs. And whence comes this averſion in your ſiſters-in-law?

Mar. Oh, from jealouſy, wicked jealouſy, of which I am the victim. They are extremely envious; and the ſmall ſucceſs I have met with in life, has given me, in them, two profeſſed and irreconcileable enemies.

Counteſs. You had no reaſon to expect that—for really, I do not ſee why your ſiſters-in-law ſhould envy you; they are young, pretty, and agreeable, the Viſcounteſs, eſpecially, is charming.

Mar. Charming, indeed!—if you did but ſee her by day-light! her complexion is frightful—her perſon awry—

Counteſs. What do you ſay? why, ſhe is extremely well-ſhaped.

Mar. Yes, with her ſtays padded; but in reality ſhe is hump-backed—and with that, has ſo little genius, ſo much conceit—and ſuch malice!—I ſhould be more inclined to like her ſiſter, ſhe certainly is leſs diſagreeable.

Counteſs. Is this the confidence you had to repoſe in me?

Mar. Why, ſurely aunt, 'tis neceſſary to mention the perſons who occaſion my diſtreſs.

Counteſs. I adviſe you to do your utmoſt towards conciliating them; for they are tenderly beloved by your father-in-law and huſband; and—

Mar.

Mar. They have been base enough to embroil me with both.

Countess. What, is your husband likewise against you?

Mar. He is the plague of my life; and indulges a jealousy which daily grows more intolerable; my patience is quite exhausted.

Countess. Now indeed, you make a confession which discovers great confidence in me; for it is very grievous, very humiliating, to be obliged to own that a husband is jealous.

Mar. 'Tis grievous, no doubt; but I see nothing humiliating, in it; he is jealous because weak enough to entertain a passion for me.

Countess. And unjust enough not to esteem you.

Mar. Oh, he esteems me in the main; I am not at all uneasy on that point.

Countess. I readily believe it. But if he be thus jealous, he does himself a violence which is very praise-worthy; for he is not troublesome, he leaves you quite at liberty.

Mar. Because he would not appear jealous in the eyes of the world.

Countess. You assist him greatly in concealing this weakness, and with little regard to the pain it may cost him. No one is more given up to dissipation than yourself; no one less with their family.

Mar. Because they torment me.

Countess. Such are your complaints: now, hear those made by your relations against you. Your father-in-law says, that towards his friends you shew nothing but cold and disdainful civility; that you turn his acquaintance into ridicule, and accuse every person who does not belong to your own set, with being *mauvais ton*, or *insupportably wearing*. That your politeness is confined to ladies

ladies who are fashionable, (if not too highly distinguished by their beauty and genius) that all those who, from choice or narrowness of income, are not dressed with elegance and affected nicety, become objects of your contempt; that trifling and fantastical manners alone have power to please and captivate you; and in short, that you discover a coquetry which disgusts all rational people; that you think the whole of a woman's glory consists in idle expence, in being served by the most fashionable millener, and followed every where by three or four giddy-brained young men, who make it their business to cry her up. It is likewise said to be among the number of your follies to persuade yourself, with extreme facility, that people are in love with you, and frequently to mistake the commonest attentions for the effects of a secret passion. Such are the charges brought against you; from the serious tenor of which, I am willing to believe them considerably exaggerated: but to give cause for all this by your levity, is going too far. Open your eyes, I conjure you, it is not yet too late; you are very young; faults at your age are excusable, and may be repaired.

Mar. In these imputations, dictated by hatred and malice, I discover the work of my sisters-in-law. I am inconsiderate, I own; but coquetry is my abhorrence; and I am so far from being easily induced to think I have made conquests, that the most positive proofs alone can convince me of it.

Countess. But 'tis always a woman's own fault when a man dares to give her any intimation of his sentiments: believe me, it is not the prettiest, but the giddiest, who attract.

Mar.

Mar. Nevertheleſs, when we are *obſédée*, followed every where; when, by the moſt pointed diſdain and viſible ill-humour, we ſhew our indifference, nay our anger; when, notwithſtanding all this, we are only the more perſecuted, what can be done?

Counteſs. I don't know of whom you are ſpeaking; but believe me, 'tis no difficult matter to extricate ourſelves from ſuch a perſecution without being diſdainful, ill-humoured, or angry; a ſincere deſire is the only thing requiſite.

Mar. Oh, madam! if you did but know what I experience in this reſpect!—There are invincible paſſions—and, ſpite of all my endeavours to the contrary, I have, for theſe two years paſſed, been the object of a flame which torments me to death. —The man is worthy too; but he has taken this unlucky folly into his head, which really makes him deſerving of compaſſion.—'Tis much talked of, I am aware, and that vexes me dreadfully.—Only think, he lives in intimacy with all my relations, my father-in-law, my mother, nay with you, aunt—and as to the manner in which I meet him every where, 'tis unparalleled—he is abſolutely my ſhadow.

Counteſs. Will you tell me his name?

Mar. The Count de Moncalde.

Counteſs. The Count de Moncalde! and do you think him in love with you?

Mar. To an exceſs, which beggars all deſcription.

Counteſs. I fancy he has not told you ſo?

Mar. He is a little too much awed by me, to venture at ſuch a confeſſion; but his conduct ſpeaks plain enough. I am really grieved at this folly; he is amiable, and formed to attach. I can't

can't conceive how a man of his ſenſe and diſcernment could yield to ſo ridiculous a paſſion; and 'tis the more wonderful, as I certainly have ſpared no pains to cure him of it.

Counteſs. Well, niece, your fears may be diſmiſſed, for I can aver that you have inſpired him with no *paſſion.*

Mar. Oh, how I wiſh it!—But aunt—

Counteſs. But—why I am certain; and to remove all your doubts on the ſubject, I will confeſs myſelf his confident; he is in love, 'tis true, and I know with whom, but you are not the perſon.

Mar. Aunt, you delight me—this diſcovery is quite enchanting.—My anger has, at laſt, reſtored him to himſelf.

Counteſs. No, indeed, ſince he has been in France, he never felt any preference, but that I allude to; which, for theſe three years paſſed, has totally abſorbed him.

Mar. (With a forced laugh.) Oh, as for *totally*, I could deny that.

Counteſs. You may believe me, for you know I never exaggerate; I am perfectly well acquainted with the ſincerity of his paſſion, which is equally tender and conſtant.

Mar. Well, this is certain, that towards me he has behaved unaccountably.—I ſhall never forgive the dreadful *ennui* I felt from all his aſſiduities.—He is by nature ſomewhat of *a bore*—and at the ſame time overwhelmed with pedantry, it muſt be confeſſed.—People ſay, he is extremely deceitful—and, for that matter, I could fairly charge him with falſehood.—Oh, this adventure is comick indeed!—it diverts me vaſtly—and—may I preſume

to

to enquire, madam?—Do you know the object of his three years passion?

Countess. Yes; and the lady is worthy of inspiring it.

Mar. And does this *model of excellence* like the Count de Moncalde?

Countess. I don't know.

Mar. He has a propensity to *the ill-starred passion.*—I fear the story of his loves does not furnish a very lively romance.—And my aunt the confident in this business!—'tis quite complete!—Forgive my pleasantry, I have the weakness to be a titterer—nor can I let slip so good an opportunity for mirth.—It really is too diverting—too diverting indeed! [*She laughs affectedly.*

Countess. I am charmed to see you possess a gaiety so natural; but since you have nothing more to communicate, permit me to leave you.

Mar. Adieu, aunt! pardon the trouble I have given you, and excuse my weakness; but when these tittering fits overtake me, to restrain myself is impossible.—However, I go away penetrated by all you have said; I will not forget your counsels; I protest, aunt, they are deeply engraved on my mind.

Countess. Adieu, niece! if you sincerely wish to be reconciled to your family, I offer you my mediation.—It is their desire that you should pass six months with them in Languedoc; and compliance on your part would, I am confident, restore you to their favour: if you consent, you will, by so doing, give me a real proof of deference and friendship; and, on that condition, I will see your father-in-law and husband, I will converse with them, and undertake to bring about a reconciliation.

Mar.

Mar. Aunt, you are too good; I will think, and reflect maturely upon it, I promise you.—Adieu, my dear aunt!—(*Aside in going.*) Oh, what a tiresome thing is *a good sort of woman!*

[*She goes out.*

SCENE IV.

THE COUNTESS, *alone.*

HOW weak a head! nor will the goodness of her heart correct the errours of her judgment.—There is no resource.—How truly I compassionate my sister for having such a child!—Yet alas! though our lots are different, shall I be a more happy mother?—On the eve of losing Emilia.—But can I repine at fortune? for, whatsoever the events of life may be, our children's virtues should always constitute our happiness and glory.—I hear Emilia—I tremble.—What an interview! how it will wring my heart!

SCENE V.

THE COUNTESS, EMILIA.

Emi. MY cousin, at length, is gone—I waited impatiently for this moment; you wished to speak with me, madam; your air, ever since the morning, has been pensive and melancholy, I am alarmed by it.—Will my mother condescend to unbosom herself to me?—You do not answer.—

Oh, heaven! what has happened? (*She takes hold on her hands*) You sigh—your eyes are averted.—Madam, you congeal me with fear.—

Countess. My child—my dear Emilia, banish your fears.

Emi. Banish them—when you weep!

Countess. (*Aside.*) Ah! what shall I say? How shall I begin?—(*Aloud.*) Emilia, you know my disposition, you know how easily I am affected—I never hid my weaknesses from you; with you I cannot dissemble nor disguise an excess of sensibility, often beyond reason.

Emi. No, I never saw you in this state before.—Ah, madam! you give me a sudden shock—

Countess. Compose yourself, my dear, I conjure you.—'Tis true, I am agitated—but not from a melancholy cause; on the contrary—it ought to inspire me with joy—nay, does inspire it.

Emi. Joy!—when grief is painted on your countenance.—You constrain yourself.—Alas! you wish to prepare me for some misfortune—some dreadful misfortune, no doubt—and it relates to me, I see it does.—Oh, my mother, my dear mother! I can bear any thing, but a separation from you.—Your tears redouble.—Just heaven! I have guessed.—Ah, you will kill me!—

Countess. Well! this is the dreadful secret.—

Emi. What do I hear?—Will you abandon me?—Oh! can I believe it?

Countess. How, my love? do you think your fate dependent on my will? are you not sure of governing that yourself?

Emi. I breathe again.—Ah, madam, what a stroke you gave me!—But why then, do you yield to this deep affliction?

Countess.

Countess. Alas! I sigh at those counsels which reason and tenderness oblige me to give.

Emi. Is that leaving me at my own disposal?—Are not your counsels sacred laws to me?—What, could the best of mothers banish her unhappy child?—Oh, no! 'tis impossible for you to demand a sacrifice which would cost me life—yes, life itself, madam; doubt not of that.

Countess. What I demand, my dear Emilia is that you will hear me, and answer, without evasion, to the questions I am going to put.

Emi. Can I answer otherwise?

Countess. Of all the men who visit here, which appears to you most amiable? Which has the largest share of your esteem?

Emi. Madam!—but—Oh, heaven!—what do I begin to discover?—He would marry me, take me to Portugal.—No, never.

Countess. That artless reply is sufficient.

Emi. What have I said?—Ah, madam! no, it is not he whom I esteem the most; I spoke without reflexion.—Can one random word decide my fate!—No, madam, you are too just.

Countess. Your heart has explained itself, my dear.

Emi. My heart!—Oh, that is filled, satisfied with filial tenderness alone.

Countess. Come, I know it better than you do; disavow not any of its impulses, they all are worthy of you. It is your good sense and discernment, my dear, which have led you to prefer the Count de Moncalde to every other: by his virtues and his character, he merited distinction from Emilia: in short, he loves you, he demands your hand—

Emi. And will he not reside in France?

Countess. Alas!—

Emi. Can he love me, if he would sever me from you?—Hard-hearted man! durst he conceive such a thought?—Wrest me from you!—tear me from my mother!—But why should I be alarmed?—you deign to leave me at my own disposal; I reject his offers; let us mention them no more I conjure you, madam.

Countess. You have promised to hear me.

Emi. Oh! what would you say?

Countess. Emilia, you are not ignorant of your situation; I have frequently mentioned it to you.

Emi. Yes, I am without fortune, I know it: Well, what does that signify? I will never marry, never leave you; and I shall not have one wish ungratified.

Countess. Oh, my dear Emilia, how you wring my bosom! Though I see the effect of your love for me with pleasure, still, I disapprove its excess. Reason should regulate all our sentiments; otherwise, however just in themselves, they become blameable, and only serve to mislead us. What, my dear, can my lessons, my cares, can they operate merely to inspire you with an attachment prejudicial to your interest? is that the only fruit which I should gather?—Alas, how much I have deceived myself!—I thought there was no sacrifice, practicable to me, which Emilia could not perform; I entertained the flattering hope that her fortitude equalled my own; I was proud of her understanding—

Emi. Ah, who can vie with you?—Oh, no! I never must pretend to that.—You can resolve to part with your daughter; while I cannot even think of leaving my mother, without shuddering.—I have not your fortitude; excuse me, if I presume

ſume to ſay, I would not have it —Yes, madam, of all your virtues, that is the only one I do not emulate—it is too cruel—

Counteſs. Am I accuſed of cruelty by Emilia?—What trials you inflict upon me!

Emi. Oh, forgive!—I err—forgive me, madam!—

Counteſs. A little reflexion will render you more juſt, my dear, I am confident. If you had not a very evident partiality towards the Count de Moncalde, if he were not worthy of inſpiring it, and if I were not aſſured that he poſſeſſes every requiſite to make a deſerving woman happy, neither his rank, his fortune, nor his perſonal graces, ſhould prompt me to inſiſt: but you have nothing; you are offered the moſt advantageous, the moſt ſplendid eſtabliſhment; the huſband propoſed is young, amiable, virtuous; he pleaſes you, he loves you; then how can I do otherwiſe than inſiſt upon your making a ſacrifice which ſo many reaſons concur to demand?

Emi. Inſiſt!—Oh, madam! could you inſiſt upon this dreadful ſacrifice?—And did you not condeſcend to ſay, you would leave me at my own diſpoſal?—My mother, my dear mother! have pity on me.—Alas! I am weak, irrational, I allow it; then, do not judge of me by yourſelf; do not pronounce a cruel ſentence which would drive me to deſpair.—Aſk not my conſent—no, I cannot give it.—What, could I leave you? could I ſee myſelf tyrannically torn from my family?—From you, my father, ſiſters, brothers, thoſe objects all ſo dear, I ſhould be ſeparated for ever.—Oh, heaven!

Counteſs. Were you ſenſible of the injury you do me, Emilia, I am well aſſured you would recall

that reason which you disdain, and by which you are deserted.—Then all I can obtain from you is a confession of unconquerable weakness!—Well, since reason in your eyes seems tyranny, let us talk no further on the subject; be your own mistress: you are hurt by my intreaties, and cannot be persuaded by my counsels; 'tis enough, I renounce the right of directing you.

Emi. What says my mother?—How you pierce my heart!—Ah, deign to excuse so culpable an errour!—dispose of me, command me.—However rigorous your will may appear, should I not yield to it with implicit confidence? do I not know that your sole view is my advantage?—Yes, I resign myself—yes, madam—on this dear hand, moistened by my tears, I abjure a criminal opposition.—Suffer my repentance to expiate my fault.

Countess. My child!—see how my tears flow; let me indulge myself by mingling them with yours. Why should I dread to shew my tenderness? you will not abuse it. Then read this heart.—You sigh, you are distressed; well, I am not less to be compassionated; the sacrifice is terrible—but reason demands it—and let my example teach you to observe her dictates only.—Though we shall meet no more, still, sure of being always cherished in your memory, I can support your absence.—Absence may divide, but cannot disunite us; does not this thought bring comfort with it?—We both shall do our duty; I, that of an affectionate mother; you, that of an obedient child. We shall be shielded from self-reproach, the greatest, the most insupportable of human evils.—Your virtues, my dear girl, will constitute the happiness of your new family: we cease to be aliens among those

those by whom we are beloved: where'er you live, you'll find a native land; I shall hear of your felicity, and rejoice in it with transport. The most unreserved correspondence will make amends for our unfortunate separation; the employment of writing to each other constantly will soften all our woes: in short, be assured, my child, that two hearts, united by a lively tenderness, never fail, in spite of fate, in spite of absence, to discover and pursue the path to happiness. Ah! while regard is mutual, can we really deserve compassion?

Emi. And yet, how grievous is the torment of being debarred for ever from the sight of those we love!—What will become of me when I have lost my guide, and such a guide as you are?—In what a light shall I behold the author of my sorrows!—him, who will barbarously tear me from my mother!—That I esteemed him, is most certain; I thought he was so much attached to you!

Countess. He is grieved himself, at being unable to fix near me; but the situation of his affairs obliges him to return to his native country.

Emi. And my father—undoubtedly, madam, you are sure of his consent?

Countess. He loves you too well to pause.

Emi. I am abandoned by every one!—no hope remains, I see!—Will you, at least, condescend to grant me time? this is my last petition; will this be refused?

Countess. I leave you to your own reflexions, my dear; I want a little privacy myself—besides, I must rejoin your father shortly, and give him an account of this conversation.—He will find that

I did not entertain a falſe opinion of Emilia's judgment.

Emi. Oh, do not boaſt of that! you will deceive my father.—Tell him, madam, his ill-fated daughter—will obey—if it be poſſible to make the effort; that it is her wiſh—but ſtill, ſhe has not dared to promiſe.—In ſhort, tell him I will ſubmit, if it muſt be—but that on my knees I beg delay, a long delay, to prepare myſelf.

Counteſs. Farewell, my dear—

Emi. Farewell, did you ſay? Oh, what a word was that!—Let me follow—let me ſee my father—

Counteſs. Emilia, do you ſo ſoon repent of your obedience, of that affecting ſubmiſſion which you juſt have ſhewn?—You deſtroy me—I am exhauſted; ſo many ſtruggles are too much in one day.

Emi. Alas, I am not myſelf!—Go, madam, I will remain here—But time!—time!—I beg for time!

Counteſs. (*Aſide.*) Let me prevent an inevitable relapſe, by finiſhing my cruel work.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE VI.

EMILIA, *alone.*

She ſinks into a chair much dejected, and ſpeaks, after a ſhort ſilence.

I AM quite worn down!—Have I promiſed?—is it indeed a reality?—Oh, my mother! did you not abuſe your influence over me?—Twice, I perceived

perceived severity in her looks.—She will have it so; she commands this dreadful sacrifice!—(*She rises and looks round her.*) And could I leave a house so dear to me?—What do I say? I must leave France—leave it for ever!—And yet, I was able to acquiesce in this cruel determination.—My father had given his consent!—Alas, with how much readiness they doom me to perpetual banishment!—My mother, you insist, I will obey—but how can you order me to live far distant from you?—She talked to me of happiness—that is no longer mine. Can I be happy without her?—And my sisters!—my brothers!—my governess!—Agatha, poor Agatha!—next to my mother, my most tender friend; how will she support this dreadful news?—What accumulated woe! My father and mother, surrounded by their family, will find consolation—but I lose every thing.—The sacrifice to me alone is complete.—Somebody comes.—Hah! 'tis Agatha.

SCENE VII.

EMILIA, AGATHA.

Aga. SISTER, I was looking for you.—Good heaven! what do I see?—In what a state I find you!—Ah! my dear Emilia—

Emi. Have you seen my mother?

Aga. No, she is out; she is just gone to my aunt's.

Emi. And my father?—

Aga. He is shut up in his study.—But there certainly has been some match proposed to you,

Emilia; I guess it by the agitation you discover.

Emi. Ah, sister! you will never guess the name of him for whom I am designed.—Agatha, dear Agatha! if your regard towards me equals mine for you, how much you are to be pitied!

Aga. Oh, speak!—explain yourself.

Emi. I am ordered to marry the Count de Moncalde; he will take me to Portugal—

Aga. Alas!—do you mean to obey?—Will you leave us? can my mother consent?—is it possible?

Emi. 'Tis but too true, dear Agatha.

Aga. No, I can't believe it—no, you ought not to obey.

Emi. What!—can I oppose my mother?

Aga. Would she part with you? could she resolve on that?

Emi. She only considers what she calls my interest, she forgets herself, and, alas! forgets likewise, that it is impossible for me to taste one joy of which she is not a witness.

Aga. Oh, do not consent!

Emi. My word is pledged.

Aga. Recall it, even from affection to my mother; your fatal obedience would be, to her, a source of endless regret.

Emi. Agatha, you do not know my mother's fortitude: guided by superiority of judgement, her sensibility may give her pain, but never will produce a moment's weakness.—She repent of having done her duty! Oh, no, she is incapable of that.

Aga. Emilia!—sister!—if you go, I shall not survive so dreadful an affliction.

Emi.

Emi. Oh, if you love me, hide an excess of grief which is too certain to augment my weakness.—Rend not a heart to pieces, which is already so much distracted by duty, tenderness, and reason!

Aga. Do not expect me to confirm you in this cruel duty—I can only mourn and despair!

Emi. Lucetta is coming.—Let us dry our tears, dear Agatha.

SCENE VIII.

EMILIA, AGATHA, LUCETTA.

Lu. (*To Emilia.*) OH, mademoiselle! what have I just heard?

Emi. How?

Lu. My lady is this instant returned with madame Celia and the Count de Moncalde.

Emi. What?

Lu. Your marriage is announced.

Emi. Good heaven! already?

Aga. Oh, sister!—

Lu. My master waited for my lady in his study; his valet-de-chambre, Bernard, was with him.—When my lady came in, she wept.—The Count de Moncalde threw himself into my master's arms.—Bernard was then sent away; but he heard my lady repeat your name twice over.

Emi. Then it is done!—and so quickly!—notwithstanding my intreaties—Alas, my mother!—she wept, say you?

Lu. Bernard declared she sobbed ready to break one's heart.

Aga. Oh, come, my dear Emilia! throw yourself at my father's feet; come, and implore his pity.

Emi. Follow me, sister, do not forsake me, and I will venture to try every thing.—Yes, I shall be empowered to overcome my natural timidity, and talk to M. de Moncalde himself, if requisite; in short, I can do any thing—but obey.—Come.— [*They go out hastily.*

Lu. (*Alone.*) She will certainly be taken to Portugal.—What a grief to the whole family!—it will kill my lady; and the poor governess, if she knows it, in what a situation must she be!—Come, let me find her, that we may, at least, weep together unrestrained. [*She goes out.*

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE the First.

THE COUNTESS, MADAME DUFRAIGNE.

Countess. YES, my dear madame Dufraigne, every thing is settled; and Emilia herself, obedient and resigned.—The Count de Moncalde returns in an hour; all my relations are apprized; the * notary is sent for, and the articles will be signed to-night.—My sacrifice is accomplished.

M. Du. Oh, madam, what a sacrifice!—But why so much precipitation?

Countess. Should I gain any thing by delay?—Can I be more perfectly acquainted with the

* *Notaire*, a publick officer, who receives and draws up deeds, bonds, treaties, and other voluntary acts. T.

character

character of him whom I have chosen?—He has been known to me these five years, and during eighteen months I have studied his disposition; for it was not to-day that I discovered his partiality towards Emilia—and be assured, it is more than a day likewise, since I have read my daughter's heart; that heart so innocent, so guileless, which is unacquainted with itself—

M. Du. Think you, madam, that she likes M. de Moncalde?

Countess. Of all the men she knows, he appears to her most amiable, most deserving of her esteem. Too virtuous and too rational to be governed by romantick notions, she is so far from exaggerating her affection for him, that I am well assured she is withheld by nothing but inherent modesty from suffering it to dwell upon, and occupy her mind. That impetuous, that violent passion, called love, is always a delusion raised by fancy; a delusion, whose greatest force does not result from a tender heart, but a lively and disordered imagination; fatal impulse, disgraceful in its cause, criminal in its effects, and imperious, merely from our weakness! often succeeded by keen remorse, always by bitter regrets, for the loss of a fleeting shadow which time and reason must inevitably chase away*. Con-

* The passion spoken of here, is that which is said to be *invincible*; and, unhappily, more than one young person has read the fabulous and dangerous account given in novels of this passion, which subdue the understanding and betray us into the violation of every duty.—It is not to sensibility alone, that such effects must be attributed, since they rather spring from imagination, and a want of reflexion and principle: we blush at the real causes, and try to disguise them; therefore, the heart is frequently taxed with errours which result from a lively and disordered fancy.

formity

formity of taste and genius, real and profound esteem, these are the only ties which produce a lasting attachment; these are the pure and durable sentiments fit for Emilia's bosom; nor will any others find admission there, I am confident.

M. Du. She will possess your judgement and all your virtues, madam.—Ah! why must she be taken from us?—Pardon these tears; I am unable to restrain them.—The articles will be signed to-night.—The poor child hoped for a delay; her heart is deeply burdened I am certain.

Countess. And mine not less so!—if it could be read, my fortitude would, perhaps, appear to have some merit.—I urged the signing of the articles myself, because I dreaded Emilia's weakness and irresolution.

M. Du. And even my master, would suffer himself to be overcome, and withdraw his consent; I am sure of that.—But to-night—how sudden!

Countess. At present, madame Dufraigne, I have but one wish, which is, that your affection for my daughter may be strong enough to make you desirous of accompanying her to Portugal.

M. Du. Ah, madam, there is nothing I would not do for her!—but I have served you fifteen years; my attachment towards you—

Countess. And can you give a greater proof of that, than by accompanying my daughter?

M. Du. Still, I presume to think that I am useful to you, madam; you have other children—

Countess. To supply your place cannot be expected, I am sensible of that, and therefore shall trust no one but myself. I will shew more attention than ever to my children.

M. Du.

M. Du. Well, madam, you command me—determine.—If I were compelled to make a choice, how could I decide?—since either way would be a sacrifice.—I should always balance between you, madam, and that dear child, who never quitted your arms but for mine. You were her wet nurse, I weaned her; you are her mother; but is not an affectionate governess, a second parent?—Pardon the expression, madam; yet, would not she acknowledge me as such, since I feel for her a tenderness quite maternal.—But notwithstanding this, my situation will be very pitiable if I leave you.—Ah, madam, what a marriage!—What a grievous day!

Countess. Worthy, honest woman!—how you melt me!—Your affection is not placed on an ungrateful object; I am sensible of all my obligations to you: by the manner in which you seconded my cares, you have justly merited the name of parent to my children.—I know how much the sacrifice I ask must cost you; to leave my house is to leave your friends, your family; but you will follow our Emilia, our child; you will contribute largely to her consolation; you will give her counsel; you will talk of her mother; and what pleasure shall I derive from thinking that you daily will repeat my name to her! You will write me a minute detail of every thing in which she is concerned; in short, to you I shall be indebted for the satisfaction of receiving, by every mail, an additional letter on the subject of Emilia: think then, how much I shall owe you! how much you will augment my gratitude!

M. Du. (*Kissing her hand.*) Oh, madam, madam! what would one not do for you? I pledge my

my word; yes, madam, I will go, you may depend upon it.

Countess. Come to my arms, my dear friend.—You impart the only gleam of comfort I have felt to-day; and that consideration would, in itself, be sufficient to compensate you, I am certain. I hear a noise—perhaps, it is my daughters. Let us conceal our emotion from every eye; let us set the example of fortitude.—To-night, when all the family are in bed, you may come to me; then we will talk and weep without restraint.

M. Du. Ah, madam!—but to-night would you talk with me!—Do you think our departure near at hand?

Countess. Alas! the precipitation of the Count de Moncalde's proceedings leaves me room to fear that urgent business recalls him to Portugal; and in this state of doubt, I will not, for a moment, delay to give both you and my daughter every instruction I think necessary.—But hush!—there is somebody coming.

M. Du. I will leave you, madam; for at present, I am neither fit to speak, nor to be seen.

[*She goes out.*

Countess. (*Alone.*) Oh, what a painful, what a trying day!

SCENE II.

THE COUNTESS, AGATHA.

Countess. COME hither, Agatha—I want to talk with you.

Aga. Madam!—

Countess.

Countess. I must blame you, my dear, for the excessive grief you discover.

Aga. Ah, madam! you know how much I love my sister—

Countess. And do you think my affection is less lively?—Still, I can restrain myself; I can hide from her, those tears which would wring her bosom, and disturb her reason.—I give her advice which wounds my very soul; I appear to condemn in her, the despair I participate, and which secretly gratifies my tenderness.—Whence comes this power, this empire over my passions? from one simple cause, from being devoid of selfishness, from having no view but Emilia's welfare; I love her for her own sake merely.—I was not born with a superiour degree of fortitude; but I have sensibility, I know how to direct my affection. A real friendship heightens our virtues and augments their number; nay more, it corrects every failing which can injure those we love.

Aga. Oh, madam, deign to excuse the effect of a first emotion! I feel the extent of my fault, which, depend upon it, I will endeavour to repair.—Your griefs would be increased by my weakness—that thought alone is sufficient to make me overcome it.

Countess. Consider, my dear girl, you may contribute towards compensating my loss.—Nothing could ever efface Emilia from my memory; but if her happiness be established, and I find in her sisters, a renewal of her tenderness, her virtues, I shall not repine at fortune.—Indeed, had not my love for her been wholly free from selfishness, I might have settled her in a manner equally splendid, without subjecting myself to a separation.

Aga. Oh, heaven! and how?

Countess.

Countess. The Baron de Verneuil asked me for her hand.

Aga. The Baron de Verneuil!

Countess. He wrote to me six months ago; I have preserved his letter, and will shew it to you.

Aga. What, with a form so little made to please, could he think of my sister?—Besides, he is above fifty.

Countess It was that disparity of age, together with the disgustful plainness of his person, which induced me to refuse him: nevertheless, he has the best of characters, and above four thousand a year. Emilia never would have left me; I was sure of her obedience; I had but one word to say; and still, I did not pause a moment. The first duty of a mother is to give her daughter a husband she can love: I had long reflected on this sacred obligation, too frequently forgotten by avarice and ambition; and I answered the Baron in a manner which left him without hope.

Aga. Alas! I cannot but admire you.—And is my sister apprized of this circumstance?

Countess. No, I have concealed it from her; fearing lest the certainty of passing her life with me, should make her prefer this match to every other. It is a secret I intrust you with, dear Agatha, because you may derive a useful lesson from it, as to the way in which we should direct our affection.—I will tell you still more—it was the will of Providence, no doubt, to prove me on all points to day—for this very morning, I received another letter from the Baron de Verneuil, containing a renewal of his former proposals with more warmth than ever.

Aga. Oh, heaven!

Countess.

Countess. In short, I have done my duty.—But I hear Lucetta's voice.—What does she come to tell us?

Aga. My sisters follow her.—Alas, they weep!

SCENE III.

THE COUNTESS, EMILIA, AGATHA, HENRIETTA, LUCETTA.

Lu. (*To the Countess*) AH, madam!—

Countess. Well?

Lu. The notary is come.—The Count de Moncalde and all the company are assembled in the saloon.—My master sends you word, madam, that they only wait for the Marchioness Aurora.

Countess. Enough—Agatha, Henrietta, go back to your father; and tell him that I beg he will send and acquaint me when my niece comes.—Go—leave me alone with Emilia.

[*Agatha, Henrietta, and Lucetta, retire weeping.*

SCENE IV.

THE COUNTESS, EMILIA.

Emil. MY mother, my dear mother! what a moment!—How shall I be able to appear in the saloon?—What terrible precipitation!—Alas, I discern but too plainly all it presages to me!—a speedy departure, without doubt—and that will be my death—yes, I believe it—

Countess.

Countess. Collect all your reason, my dear girl—mine alone would not be sufficient to support me; remember that.—I am in want of your assistance, my love, you have promised to give it, and I depend upon you. Alas, I foresee that we must prepare for a speedy separation.

Emi. Hah!—in a month?—You do not answer.—In a few days, perhaps?—Good heaven, what cruelty!—You know the time; conceal nothing; at least allow me to learn my fate from your lips.

Countess. Of the moment I am ignorant—but I believe it to be near.

Emi. Oh, can that be?

Countess. Our time is precious; let us not waste it in superfluous regrets—at least, let the last hours we spend together be useful to my Emilia.—She knows all the duties of an affectionate child; it remains for me to acquaint her with those of a wife, a mother.

Emi. And what can I learn by precept, which your example has not taught me?—I have never quitted you—I know and cherish all those sacred duties you would specify.—It should be my great, my unremitting care to please, and particularly to gain the confidence and esteem of that man, who, henceforth alas! will be the sole director of my fate.—Impelled by duty, and a wish to prevent him from abusing his power and suffering me to feel it with severity, I will convince him, by my conduct, that I am fully sensible of, and obedient to it.—If he be unjust, I should only seek to reclaim him by good-nature and indulgence; cautiously avoiding reproaches, and screening his faults from every eye.—If he loves me, it shall be my endeavour to give him useful

advice; nor will I exert the influence I may possess over his mind, but to promote his interest, happiness, and honour.—Nay more, I am sensible that I must be an economist, and apply assiduously to domestick cares, or I should but imperfectly fulfil the duties of a wife—those of a mother, the same example has as fully taught me.—She is to live only for her children; to renounce pleasure and dissipation, that she may be entirely devoted to the care of educating them; she is to spend the day in teaching, and part of the night in studying, and acquiring knowledge for their benefit; she is cheerfully to sacrifice her youth, her time, nay health itself, for them.—This is not what I think their due, but what I have learned from the sublime example which has been given me. (*She falls at her mother's feet.*) Oh, my mother! allow the eldest of your children, who, from her age, ought most sensibly to feel the extent of your kindness; allow her, in this afflicting moment, to pour forth, in the names of all, their gratitude and love.—They will make you happy, doubt it not; those fortunate children who remain with you, will compensate for the loss of one ill-fated child.—And let me, while kneeling at your feet, oh, best of mothers! let me solemnly assure you, that your virtues and your lessons, never shall be effaced from my remembrance.—No, I will not disgrace you; to equal you I cannot promise, but I will, at least, endeavour at it, and place in this noble ambition all the glory of my life.

Countess. Oh, my child!—my dear, my real friend! could that all-guiding Hand which wrests you from your mother, could it more kindly soften the rigours of a separation so afflictive, than by suffering me to know how little you will hereafter stand

in

in need of my advice?—Oh, inestimable recompence of all my cares!—Go, depart with fortitude; you leave me free from anxiety.—My tears still flow, but they are delicious tears—Certain of your principles, your judgement, my first, my fondest wish is gratified.—If fate had not divided us, what happiness ever could have equalled mine?—But ought we to aspire at unalloyed felicity?—Emilia is my daughter!——Heaven has done enough for me.—Somebody comes—to call us, no doubt.

Emi. What, so soon?

SCENE V.

THE COUNTESS, EMILIA, LUCETTA.

Lu. MADAM, they wait for you.

Countess. Is my niece come?

Lu. No, madam; she does not intend it; she has sent an excuse.

Countess. Let us go, my dear.

Emi. One moment.—I can't support myself.—Ah! what are you about to do? What are you about to sign?—You go to relinquish an authority which I always held most dear; an authority which never was exerted, but to promote my interest and happiness.—Alas! to-night I shall depend upon another!—that thought now fills my mind with more than usual dread.—Oh, madam! it is not yet too late; let us delay, I conjure you!—Pity my agitation, my extreme disorder!

Countess. Consider, dear Emilia—

SCENE

SCENE VI.

THE COUNTESS, EMILIA, CELIA, LUCETTA.

Celia, entering hastily, with an air of emotion and joy.

I AM come to fetch you.—What! both in tears!—Embrace me, sister; and you likewise, my sweet Emilia.—I can't rein in my joy.—If you did but know—The Count de Moncalde!—I love him beyond measure.—When you hear the marriage settlement read—I think you will be contented.

Emi. Oh, madam! can interest, can the most splendid advantages, divert me one moment from so just a grief?

Celia. In short—I know what I say.—Come, come; let us go, for you are expected with the utmost impatience.

Countess. Come, Emilia.

Emi. Oh, my dear mother!—(*The Countess takes her daughter by the arm, and leads the way.*)

Celia. (*Aside.*) I am transported—one instant longer, and the secret had escaped me.

[*She goes out.*

Lucetta. (*Alone.*) Madame Celia has an air of gaiety, which is very wonderful.—I saw both my mistress and mademoiselle Emilia were shocked at it; and for my part, so am I too.—Such emotion, such transports for the sake of money!—Fie upon't, 'tis shameful. It would be wise to conceal that excessive joy, for it really is disgusting.—Oh, here's the poor governess.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

MADAME DUFRAIGNE, LUCETTA.

Lu. WHAT, could not you ſtand the reading of the articles?

M. Du. No, I had not courage.

Lu. Nor I neither. Ah, who would have ſaid that we ſhould be ſo melancholy at mademoiſelle Emilia's wedding! The whole houſe is in conſternation, and every ſervant quite diſtracted!

M. Du. I am ſure, at leaſt, that the ſettlement is drawn up in the moſt advantageous manner poſſible for mademoiſelle Emilia; becauſe, as I was going through one of the rooms while they waited for my miſtreſs, I ſaw madame Celia and M. de Moncalde, *tête-à-tête*; and ſhe was expreſſing her ſurprize and joy by the moſt lively exclamations, which even went beyond reaſon (if I may preſume to ſay ſo) however great the advantages may be to her niece.

Lu. Perhaps, he is to ſettle all his fortune on her?

M. Du. I have no doubt of it: but, alas! that will be no conſolation to the poor child.—Don't I hear my lady's voice?

Lu. Yes, indeed—and how pale ſhe looks!—Madame Celia ſupports her.

SCENE VIII.

THE COUNTESS, CELIA, MADAME DUFRAIGNE, LUCETTA.

Cel. A CHAIR! a chair!—I foresaw this; she could not bear to hear the settlement read.—Sit down, dear sister. (*The Countess seats herself, and draws out her handkerchief with which she covers her face.*)

Lu. My lady is going to be ill!

Cel. It will go off, it will go off.

Lu. (*In a low voice to Madame Dufraigne.*) Do but see what an air of satisfaction madame Celia has.

M. Du. (*In a low voice.*) 'Tis unparalleled—

Cel. Leave me alone with her.—Go, go I intreat you, Madame Dufraigne; and you, Lucetta, don't make yourself uneasy—believe me, there is no cause; only leave us.

Lu. (*Aside, looking at Celia.*) This is unaccountable indeed!—there must be something more in it than what appears.

[*She goes out with madame Dufraigne.*

SCENE IX.

THE COUNTESS, CELIA.

Celia. (*Aside.*) HOW shall I prepare her for so much happiness? (*Aloud.*) Compose yourself, sister; really, your grief is unreasonable.

Countess.

Countess. It is excessive, at least—but was ever grief more justly founded?

Cel. Oh, for that matter—still you must try to moderate its excess—for, in short, you cannot be excused from returning into the saloon.

Countess. (*Rising.*) You are right, and I ought not to have left it; but you hurried me away.

Cel. You were near fainting.

Countess. And my daughter, what will she think of such a weakness? Come, let us return; lead me—

Cel. There is no haste.

Countess. But Emilia will come and find me here.—

Cel. No, I desired her father to detain her, and they agreed to go on with the settlement during your absence; you will be fetched when that business is over; you may sign blind-fold.—Yes, yes, upon my word—

Countess. But I was present, and did not hear you say all this.

Cel. True, you were present, but you had not the use of your senses; nor was Emilia at all more rational.—I settled matters with your husband and the Count de Moncalde, and took you away at the very moment when you were going to lose all recollection.—Sit down; for your looks are still so wild, they terrify me.

Countess. (*Seating herself.*) Indeed—I have but a confused idea of what passed in the saloon.

Cel. I readily believe it; for you fainted away as soon as you went out, and have been near a quarter of an hour in the anti-room, absolutely senseless.

Countess. But my daughter, did she know it?

Cel. No, no; be easy.

Countess. Let us return—give me your arm—

Cel. Not yet.

Countess. (*Rising.*) But why am I detained?—Is not Emilia taken ill?—Do you conceal nothing from me?

Cel. Examine my countenance, and see if it bespeaks any distress. (*The Countess looks at Celia, who smiles and embraces her.*)

Countess.—(*With surprise.*) Sister!

Cel. I laugh—I cry—I am not myself.

Countess. (*With extreme emotion.*) How?—Speak.—What does this mean?

Cel. There, you are quite out of your wits already.—I know a little secret which would give you pleasure, but—

Countess. Can you keep it to yourself, when I am in such a situation?—

Cel. 'Tis a trifle; but, however—in the first place, the Count de Moncalde settles his whole fortune on your daughter—and besides that—I cannot venture to proceed.

Countess. My sister! my dear friend! what do you lead me to hope?—Will his departure be delayed?

Cel. That's the thing.—

Countess. Kind heaven!—and how long will he stay?

Cel. Gently, gently.—Compose yourself, and then I'll answer.

Countess. Oh, can it be?—Six months—a year, perhaps?

Cel. Moderation, or I will not say one word.—

Countess. My dear sister! my friend!—forgive me—speak—fear nothing—I am composed.

Cel. And you tremble, you are quite exhausted—you breathe with difficulty.

Countess. But tell me—speak, for pity's sake!

Cel.

Cel. Well then, listen patiently. The Count de Moncalde, charmed with being indebted to me for his happiness, was just now induced by gratitude to tell me this little secret: he proposed a pleasure to himself from surprizing you; but the state into which we saw you thrown, on hearing the beginning of the articles, convinced him that some precaution must be used in disclosing it; so I undertook the commission.—At this moment likewise, they are preparing your daughter; and—

Countess. O sister, proceed with your explanation, and dread lest so much caution should fill me with fallacious hopes.

Cel. I have no fears.

Countess. Hah!—and if instead of one year, I flattered myself with two—with three—

Cel. That will be quite as you please.

Countess. Is it possible?—Sister!—Emilia!—my child!—where is she?—Come—

Cel. I tell you, they are preparing her.

Countess. Well?—

Cel. I can resist no longer, my dear friend.—You are the happiest of mothers.

Countess. What?——my daughter!—Gracious powers! I hear her.—

Cel. Yes, she is coming; and to her I yield the unutterable pleasure of acquainting you with the excess of your felicity.

SCENE X. and last.

THE COUNTESS, CELIA, EMILIA.

Emi. (*Wildly, and running with extreme precipitation.*) MY mother!—(*She throws herself into the Countess's arms.*)

Countess. My child!—

Emi. Oh, madam!—I shall never leave you.—

Countess. Never!—Kind heaven!

Cel. Sister!—She totters; she turns pale.—Let us get a chair for her. *(The Countess sinks into the chair, and is supported by Emilia.)*

Emi. Oh, my dear mother! can you conceive my joy?—Ah, you alone are able so to do!

Countess. You will never leave me!—never!—And how is it?——What assurance shall I receive of this?—Are we not deluded?—A fallacious hope would kill me.—

Cel. The Count de Moncalde wished to prove your esteem for him, and the disinterestedness of your affection for Emilia; he was desirous that you should have the fortitude and the glory of giving up your daughter, that he might have the merit and the happiness of restoring to your arms a child so dear!—All his property is in France; he will never return to Portugal.

Countess. Can it be?—Kind heaven!—*(To Emilia.)* And your father—

Emi. I left him in the arms of M. de Moncalde; I outstript them; I have flown—

Countess. Most generous of men!—Oh, let us hasten to them!

Emi. They are coming.—They are here.

Countess. I see him.—Oh, my son!—*(She runs towards the Count de Moncalde, who advances and throws himself at her feet. Henrietta and Agatha, the governess, Lucetta, and several more domesticks, run in a throng and surround the Countess; expressing, by their attitudes, the most lively joy.*

Countess. *(Embracing the Count de Moncalde.)* My son, my son!—how richly you deserve a name so tender!—you give me back Emilia.—Oh, it is

life

life itself, I receive from you!—*(To the Count d'Orsan.)* My dear husband—my daughter—my children—my sister—embrace in me, the most fortunate of mothers!

(The Count de Moncalde, still at the Countess's feet, holds one of her hands, kisses it and weeps; the Count d'Orsan and Emilia, advance and support her in their arms; Celia, Agatha, and Henrietta, run and embrace her; while the governess and Lucetta, grasp her hand and kiss it: the other servants remain at a little distance, and, by various gestures, express the tender interest they take in what passes. It is necessary for all the motions in this dumb-show, to be very lively and rapid. The curtain drops.

THE

SCHEMING LADY;

A DRAMA,

OF TWO ACTS.

15

PERSONS of the DRAMA.

The Baroness d'ARZELE.

LAURETTA, *her daughter.*

LISETTA, *the Baroness's woman.*

BELINDA, *friend to the Baroness.*

Madame ROGER, *Lauretta's governess.*

The Marchioness de BLEVILLE.

CAROLINE, *her daughter.*

A Valet-de-chambre.

Scene, the Baroness's house at Paris.

THE SCHEMING LADY.

Ce n'eſt que par foibleſſe, & faute de connoître le droit chemin, qu'on prend des ſentiers détournés, et qu'on a recours à la ruſe.

Fenelon, Dialogue des Morts.

It is only from weakneſs, and want of knowing the right way, that we ſtrike into devious paths, and have recourſe to ſtratagem. T.

ACT I.

SCENE the Firſt.

The Stage repreſents a Saloon.

MADAME ROGER, LISETTA.

Liſ. WELL, 'tis certainly true; my lady owned it this morning before me; her ſon is to marry mademoiſelle Caroline.

M. Rog. The Marchioneſs de Bléville's daughter?

Liſ. Yes; but my lady would not have it publickly mentioned yet awhile: ſhe h s even deſired the marchioneſs not to ſpeak of it.

M. Rog. Why so?

Lis. How can I tell? My lady passes her life in secret contrivances, which, to others, are quite incomprehensible; 'tis her way: between you and me, she is both indiscreet and mysterious; I have made the observation a thousand times.

M. Rog. Still, she has a great deal of sense.

Lis. Well, people in general say otherwise: nevertheless, she does what she pleases, knows every body, and has a hand in every thing. Oh, she is a woman of matchless activity.

M. Rog. I only blame her for keeping her daughter in a convent from three years of age; for she has a great fortune, and might easily have brought her up at home.

Lis. Nevertheless she is extremely fond of mademoiselle Lauretta; but she has so much business that she cannot attend to her daughter's education.

M. Rog. 'Tis a pity, for mademoiselle Lauretta has the sweetest disposition—

Lis. Yes, her heart is a good one; she seems distractedly fond of her brother.

M. Rog. Aye, he often comes to see us at the convent; and when Mademoiselle Lauretta is in the parlour with him, 'tis such a pleasure to hear them talk!

Lis. Indeed, she is a great talker.

M. Rog. Oh, you have heard nothing; she has been here only three days; and is not yet perfectly at ease; but in the convent, she is the life of them all. She was born thus, for even at four years old, her *little arguments* were enough to make one die with laughing.

Lis. And at fifteen, she seems to have a number of *little stories*, which are rather tedious; and, as I am apt to believe, not always strictly true.

In

In ſhort, to ſpeak plainly, I ſuſpect that ſhe is ſomewhat given to lying.

M. Rog. Pho, conſider, when people talk a great deal, that muſt ſometimes happen.

Liſ. Fie upon it, 'tis a dreadful thing.

M. Rog. Oh, ſhe tells none but little innocent lyes which hurt nobody.

Liſ. Still, thoſe perſons who allow themſelves to tell lyes for amuſement, are juſt as capable of lying to promote their intereſt.

M. Ro. No, no; 'tis mere childiſhneſs, and will wear off; beſides, ſhe cannot help talking, and is a girl of ſuch ſenſe, that ſhe has not power to hold her tongue a moment: ſometimes, while ſhe ſits at work along with me, ſhe goes on, chit chat, chit chat, juſt as if ſhe were reading; and that, for whole hours togther.

Liſ. But what can ſhe find to tell you?

M. Rog. Why, ſtories—nonſenſe—in ſhort, rather than be ſilent, ſhe would ſpeak ill of herſelf.

Liſ. Then judge whether ſhe would not be capable of ſpeaking ill of others.

M. Rog. 'Twill go off, 'twill go off; I was juſt the ſame myſelf, when young.

Liſ. But you have traces ſtill remaining.

M. Ro. A propos, do tell me; my lady is a great friend of madame de Saint-Alban's; I did not know that.

Liſ. 'Tis a new thing; and my lady has ſome view in it, no doubt.

M. Rog. She goes there three or four times a day; I learned this from my daughter, who is madame de Saint-Alban's woman, aye, and favourite too, for ſhe is her confident, I can tell you that. Madame de Saint-Alban's ſervice is

a good

a good one; nobody leaves it without getting some employment: but for all this, my lady's interest is still better; think how she has made old Bernard her valet-de chambre's fortune! he has a good place in the farms: my lady owed him but seven years wages, and to make up for that, gave him a place worth two hundred and fifty pounds. There is generosity! especially, as Bernard is an idiot, and only fit to wait in an antichamber: then the Marquis's tutor, to whom she promised nothing but a pension of fifty pounds at the end of ten years, he is made secretary to the embassy. My lady always exceeds her promises, yet gives nothing out of her own pocket; this is admirable—truly admirable.—

Lis. And would you believe that she is not happy with all this?

M. Rog. How? she not happy!

Lis. I do assure you there is nobody more to be pitied. I who live with her see it. For instance, the anxious life she leads has destroyed her health; then, she does not enjoy her power, from a continual apprehension of losing it. By rendering service to one person, she disobliges many, so daily increases the number of her enemies; and what is singularly unfortunate, those whom she loads with favours excuse themselves from shewing any gratitude, by pretending that she always finds her own advantage in serving them. Besides, she is perpetually harrassed by disquiet and vexation, and much less gratified with success, than afflicted by disappointment. The disgrace of a man in office, the slightest change of ministry, break her rest, and throw her into dreadful agitations. She is always complaining of the calumnies of her enemies, the malicious constructions of the world, the ingratitude

ingratitude of those whom she has patronized, the severe mortifications she is so often obliged to undergo, by constantly sacrificing taste to interest, and associating, not with the most agreeable people, but with those who may be likely to serve her purposes; in short, by resigning ease, pleasure, and friendship, that she may be wholly devoted to business and intrigue.

M. Rog. Has she no friends?—Why, there's madame Belinda.

Lis. Oh, she has quarrelled two or three times with her already; madame Belinda is so fickle!—However, she is some way connected with the Marchioness de Bléville, and that was the cause of the last reconciliation.

M. Rog. I hear mademoiselle Lauretta's voice.—

Lis. She may always be heard before she is seen. Aye, here she comes.

SCENE II.

LAURETTA, MADAME ROGER, LISETTA.

Lau. GOVERNESS!—Hah! so you are here, Lisetta; I am delighted at finding you together; I have a thousand things to tell you.—I am at the height of my wishes; my brother is going to be married; 'tis no longer a secret; mamma readily intrusted me with the affair; I suspected it.—M. de Mirvaux, you know, is brother to the Marchioness de Bléville, and I saw mamma paid him supernatural attention.—I call it *supernatural*, because

cauſe there does not exiſt ſo tireſome a mortal as that M. de Mirvaux—he is deaf, he ſtutters—poor ſoul!—and is ſilent to exceſs—however, let that paſs; but not to hear one word of what people ſay to him!—and yet, notwithſtanding all this, he was treated with great attention by mamma.—I heard her tell him that he might be aſſured ſhe would procure him the vacant government, for her happineſs depended on it.—Oh, I very well underſtood there was ſomething more than appeared under that, and certainly it is, becauſe M. de Mirvaux is the Marchioneſs de Bléville's brother, and conſequently, uncle to my intended ſiſter-in-law.—Liſetta, do you know Caroline?—Is ſhe not a charming girl—ſuch ſweetneſs, ſuch elegance—ſuch uniform evenneſs of temper!—with vivacity, accompliſhments, genius—and ſuch a diſpoſition—oh, her diſpoſition is incomparable!—

M. Rog. Why, mademoiſelle, people would ſay you had ſpent your life with her; nevertheleſs, you only ſaw her once at a ball laſt winter, and yeſterday, at your mother's, for a quarter of an hour.

Lau. Aye, but I have chatted with her a great deal.

M. Rog. How can that be? you were unable to ſpeak to her yeſterday.

Lau. True; but the day I met her at the ball, we had a long converſation.—Nothing is more ſingular; I remember ſhe told me a ſiſter was wanting to her happineſs. I replied, that I ſhould have been particularly fortunate in poſſeſſing one like her—this is very remarkable—but you have not heard all.—She was affected, embraced me, and at that inſtant, thinking of my brother, I exclaimed;

claimed; but I have a brother!—She blushed, so did I.—She perfectly caught my meaning—I saw it plainly. A minute afterwards, my brother came, and asked her to dance—

Lis. Oh, mademoiselle, permit me to stop you there; for your brother was not at Paris, he spent all the last winter at Strasburg.

M. Rog. (Laughing.) Hah, hah, hah!—poor child, she is quite disconcerted.—What a pity it is that you interrupted her; she was going to tell us the prettiest story—

Lis. I do not doubt it; she relates very well, and only wants a little better memory.

Lau. (Embarrassed.) Really—I thought—But you are right, Lisetta: I owe you no ill-will for having taken me up.

Lis. I did it from regard, mademoiselle, I am concerned to see you guilty of a fault—

Lau. What fault, Lisetta?

Lis. Alas, mademoiselle, I do not even dare to name it.

Lau. How so?—But governess—

M. Rog. Why, mademoiselle, the thing is this; you chatter too fast;—I have told you so before.

Lau. (To M. Roger.) But you loved to hear my stories—I have always seen you laugh at them.—Nay, even you yourself, governess, are constantly telling new ones.

M. Rog. Oh, yes, to pass the time away.—But what did very well in your childhood, will not do now: you are fifteen, and must leave off this habit.

Lau. Well then, rid me of it; since it was from you I received it.

Lis.

Lis. Unhappily, it is far more easy to acquire than forsake.—But hush; here is my lady. Let us begone. [*She goes out with madame Roger.*

SCENE III.

THE BARONESS, BELINDA, LAURETTA.

The Baroness, *with a packet of letters in her hand, a Valet-de-chambre following.*

Bar. WHAT an immense packet! [*She reads to herself.*

Bel. How!—must all that be answered?

Bar. (*Still reading.*) Bless me!—

Bel. What now?

Bar. This is dreadful.—That unfortunate Simon, for whom I got a place in the farms, has just made a fraudulent bankruptcy!

Bel. I am not surprized to hear it—he was such a worthless man.—*A propos*, do you know that the preceptor you provided for the Viscountess, and whom you so strongly recommended, ran away the day before yesterday, after having stolen above eight hundred pounds worth of diamonds?

Bar. Yes, it is a disagreeable event.—How the man deceived me!——I must acknowledge, I thought he possessed superiour merit.

Lau. Oh, dear! I am sorry for that—I knew him. Was it not he, mamma, who sung such droll ballads, and mimicked harlequin and the clown so cleverly?

Bar. (*To the valet-de-chambre.*) Put all these papers into my closet.—Observe—a man dressed in black may, perhaps, come here in half an hour, shew

ſhew him into my room, and apprize me immediately.—Tell la Pierre to put on a grey coat, and give him this letter to carry as directed, but not till duſk.—Do you underſtand?—Stay, that I may recollect.—Oh, if the young painter returns, let him know that he will certainly be admitted into the academy of painting—but then, he muſt finiſh the picture of my little dog; don't forget to mention that.—Go.—Stay a moment.—I believe I have told you every thing—yes; go.—(*The valet-de-chambre goes out.*) Oh, Lauretta, I want to ſpeak with you. Madame, and mademoiſelle de Bléville, will be here to-day; exert all your endeavours to pleaſe the latter, I beg of you.

Lau. Caroline?—yes, mamma, moſt readily; for ſhe has quite won my heart.

Bar. How ſo? do you know her?

Lau. Yes, very well; I ſaw her at a ball, where we had a great deal of chat. I frequently mentioned my brother to her, and really believe ſhe is much inclined in his favour.—Beſides, ſhe actually places confidence in me.

Bar. Well, that's a fortunate accident; we muſt make the moſt of it. Endeavour to engage her in a private converſation to-day, and give me an account of what paſſes.

Lau. Yes, madam.

Bar. Go, my dear, return to your governeſs.

Lau. Mamma, would you have me tell you the method I ſhall take in ſpeaking of my brother?—I ſhall begin—

Bar. Enough, we will converſe about that preſently.

Lau. Oh, I am all impatience to talk with her. I wiſh we were together now.—Firſt, I ſhall ſay—

Bar.

Bar. No more, Lauretta.—Go, my dear. (*Lauretta kisses her mother's hand and goes out.*)

SCENE IV.

THE BARONESS, BELINDA.

Bar. AT last, I am certain of this marriage which I so passionately desired; I have conducted the matter with tolerable address—I have omitted nothing.—For instance, I knew that Lisetta was acquainted with one of the Marchioness's women, whose interest I charged her to secure; Lisetta has sense, and executed this commission with much cleverness.

Bel. I believe it is not the first of the kind she has received from you.

Bar. Our successes chiefly depend on an attention to these little matters.

Bel. True, this is the secret of the trade; and from hence, evil-minded persons say, that we intriguers are less indebted for success to our understandings, than to a certain pliability of temper.

Bar. Intriguers—really you have such expressions—

Bel. Rather impolite, perhaps?—If I were as consummate at business as you are, I should not make this candid acknowledgement; but I only intrigue by fits, and from caprice, and I honestly confess it. When I become an adept, I shall change my style, being fully aware that the height of the art consists in always disguising the truth, even when *tête-à-tête* with a friend.—But let us return

return to this marriage, I muſt own I ſtill have fears.

Bar. I have not one, provided you continue your good offices for me with the Marchioneſs.

Bel. My word is pledged, and you may depend upon it; but I am inquiſitive, you muſt conceal nothing from me; I ſuſpect that you do not tell me all.

Bar. Suſpect me?

Bel. Oh, I am ſure of it.—What is the meaning of all thoſe viſits which you have been making for this week paſſed to madame de Saint-Alban?—Come, be open; otherwiſe, I declare, I have a plan quite ripe, which would unveil what you attempt to diſguiſe.

Bar. You anticipate me, for I really meant to tell you about that.

Bel. Come, come, no pretended confidence, for I give you warning that my brother is an intimate friend of madame de Saint-Alban's, and he returns from his eſtate this evening; therefore, I aſſure you, I ſhall learn the whole truth from him.

Bar. Why, my dear Belinda, it is not you whom I wiſh to deceive; indeed you wrong me.

Bel. I dread your inadvertency.—I recollect you have ſhewn ſome inſtances of it already. But let us reſume the ſubject—

Bar. Well then, by way of ſecuring this marriage, I thought I would endeavour to obtain the promiſe of a place at court for my intended daughter-in-law; I took ſome ſteps for that purpoſe, and learned there was an engagement ſubſiſting which oppoſed my wiſhes; but the name of the party I could not obtain: however, I found

that madame de Saint-Alban interfered in the business; now, as she has no children, I imagined she could not be much in earnest, and as I had an opportunity of serving her in an affair, about which she is personally concerned, I went to wait on her.

Bel. What, did you offer to ensure success in the business wherein she is personally concerned, provided she would relinquish the place?

Bar. Mind the conclusion: I began by a tender of services, and then asked the name of the person to whom the place was promised.—This question, as you may conceive, was artfully put.

Bel. Oh, I can trust you for that.

Bar. Absolutely though, I overshot my mark.—She replied, the place was promised to the daughter of a friend of hers, whose name she had pledged her honour to conceal.

Bel. So then, all your art was lost: how frequently have you thus lavished it in vain, and merely for the satisfaction of your conscience!

Bar. Afterwards, I renewed my visit, and enquired whether the gentleman was an officer, and capable of holding a government; she answered in the affirmative.

Bel. And you offered to procure the vacant government for him, if he would give up the place?

Bar. Exactly so; but I took the precaution of making madame de Saint-Alban promise to conceal my name from this gentleman, who wishes to remain unknown himself: in short, she made my proposal to him this morning; he seemed much tempted, but desired a few hours for consideration, and will return a positive answer tonight.

Bel.

Bel. I am all ſurprize.

Bar. What think you of this manœuvre?—I muſt tell you though, that ſince yeſterday, I have been certain of procuring the government for whomſoever I pleaſe.

Bel. But you promiſed M. de Mirvaux, the Marchioneſs de Bleville's brother, that you would uſe all your intereſt in order to obtain it for him; how will you get out of that ſcrape?

Bar. Oh, nothing is more eaſy; he will think I have failed; I ſhall tell the Marchioneſs her daughter will have a place; I ſhall urge on the marriage, and when that is over, the reſt will give me little anxiety. I own, I am ſeriouſly hurt at having flattered this poor M. de Mirvaux with ill-grounded hopes, and equally ſo, at being under the neceſſity of continuing to deceive him; however, I will ſerve him on ſome other occaſion: beſides, I only ſacrifice his intereſt, to that of his niece, whom he loves extremely—ſo, in fact, this is all innocent enough.

Bel. Yes, yes; and it were to be wiſhed that intrigues never produced any thing more heinous.—But tell me, can you form no gueſs as to the name of the gentleman who had procured this place for his daughter?

Bar. I could not diſcover that—neither is madame de Saint-Alban known to have any particular friend who has a daughter.

Bel. However, to-night you will receive the anſwer.

Bar. Yes, he will return at ſeven o'clock to madame de Saint-Alban's; and if he comes into the agreement, I have given her leave to diſcloſe my name; but ſhe is to deſire that he will not mention

mention it, till after the conclusion of the marriage.

Bel. The addition of a place to offer, certainly renders your son a better match; still, without so much contrivance, you might, perhaps, have been more certain of success; for if the marchioness discovers all these intrigues, the marriage will be broken off; her turn is peculiar; she lived formerly at court, but for the last ten years, having been wholly devoted to the education of her daughter, she has almost renounced the world, passing the greater part of her time upon her own estate; solitude has given her character an original cast; her ideas are quite singular: for example, she has the most rivetted aversion to every thing which wears the appearance of intrigue, and still harbours prejudices against you on that account, notwithstanding my endeavours to remove them: therefore, beware. If you would have taken my advice, you had only to remain quiet, and this marriage had been certain; but you possess an activity of temper which nothing can moderate, together with a wonderful aversion to repose.

Bar. Never fear, we shall succeed; for would the Marchioness have consented to come hither, to bring her daughter, and speak to me herself on the subject, if she had not been inwardly determined?

Bel. Why her first visit was only yesterday; she has given no absolute promise; besides, are you apprized of her reason for waiting on you? It is to study your character, and to know you.

Bar. To study my character—positively, that's delightful.—Think you, the examination will be very embarrassing? are you much disturbed about it?

Bel.

Bel. Why yes, a little.

Bar. Still, as it is ſo much my intereſt to prejudice madame de Bléville in my favour, I may, without vanity, believe that I ſhall be able to ſucceed.

Bel. I know you have done wonders of that kind; but you never engaged with a perſon who founded ten years of reflexion upon fifteen of experience.

Bar. She certainly is a very ſhallow woman, depend upon that.

Bel. Thoſe perſons, who are neither ready nor cunning, appear ſtupid to you. I have made the obſervation a thouſand times. By ſuperiority of addreſs, you will eaſily defeat artifice; but you are not ſufficiently aware of the effect produced by ſimplicity of manners and genuine good ſenſe: nevertheleſs, believe me, there is nothing which more certainly diſconcerts machinations and cunning, than openneſs and ſincerity.—I ſpeak from experience, having been caught that way myſelf; therefore, I renounced intrigue and duplicity.—However, notwithſtanding that, I am now going to employ them again in your ſervice; I am going to deceive the poor Marchioneſs who relies upon me; this is giving you a ſtrong proof of friendſhip; but the thing, to you, is ſo important, that I know not how to refuſe; yet, I muſt own, my forebodings are very unpleaſant. Madame de Bléville awes me, I confeſs it; ſhe has ſuch candour, ſuch a turn of mind, that I am overcome by her, ſpite of every effort to the contrary: when I wiſh to deceive her, ſhe attaches me; indeed, her rectitude and goodneſs have continually made me bluſh in ſecret for myſelf and my deceitful conduct.

Bar. Deceitful!—Why you are quite silly! Is not my son an excellent match? may he not, from birth and fortune, justly aspire to madame de Bléville's daughter? and by facilitating this business, do you draw the young lady into a bad alliance?

Bel. Certainly not; but still, in order to fix the Marchioness, she must be deceived as to your character: in short, it is necessary to tell her a thousand lyes.

Bar. Perhaps, you wish to persuade me that you never told a lye before?

Bel. Alas, no. I have too frequently shewn that vile complaisance towards you!—But I tell lyes from weakness, not inclination; therefore, disgust and remorse quickly succeed the offence.

Bar. I by no means comprehend this display of fine sentiments; though I guess that some interest of your own, with which I am unacquainted, prompts you to harangue thus.

Bel. Then, you do not believe me?

Bar. Why, I never was deluded by *nonsense*; you know that, dear Belinda.

Bel. Woe to that person, who gives the name of *nonsense* to such natural emotions of sensibility and penitence! When I act against my conscience, the very struggle which I feel affords me pleasure; for although it makes me suffer, still, at the same time it consoles me, by proving that the deed my judgement censures was repugnant and unnatural to my heart: then, I impute my errours to bad advice and dangerous intimacies; and thus, being reconciled to myself, I am led to hope that experience and reflexion will

will overcome faults which I deplore and abominate.

Bar. What an invective!—how vehement!—You are really quite in a rage.

Bel. Yes, I confess it; nor can I bear to see that injurious distrust which never leaves your bosom. You always have the folly to suspect secret and mysterious plans in every thing; you consider words merely as deceitful signs made to disguise the truth—and with such ideas, how can you retain friends?—But I will no longer irritate, nor embroil myself; you have rendered me many services, which (whatsoever your inducements might be) I ought not to forget: it is now in my power to make a return, and you may depend on my exerting myself for that purpose; but, I protest, this is the last time I will be governed by a complaisance repugnant to my principles and inclination.

Bar. For my part, I make no such engagement; being sensible that nothing will cost me dear, which obliges you and testifies my gratitude.

Bel. Now again you wrong me: can you think the promise of a recompence is necessary in order to rekindle my zeal?

Bar. Bless me! how irritable, how captious you are!—you spurn at every word I say—

Bel. Because you employ deceit, and suspect the same in me, when I am exempt from it: this may render artifice baneful.—Oh, let me again advise you to stand in awe of madame de Bléville; and dread, lest while trying to flatter, you mortally offend her: recollect that she is rectitude and frankness itself; believe

me, and forbear to practise any of this idle cunning upon her.

A valet-de-chambre. (*To the Baroness.*) The man in black, is in your dressing-room, madam.

Bar. Very well. Is my carriage ready?

Valet. Yes, madam.

[*The valet-de-chambre retires.*

Bar. (*To Belinda.*) I must go out immediately upon business of importance; but do you remain here, for I still have several things to tell you, and will soon return.

Bel. Very well; I will stay till you come back. [*The Baroness goes out hastily.*

SCENE V.

BELINDA, *alone.*

WHAT a woman!—What a disposition!—It is madness to entertain a friendship for her.—Can she be capable of returning it?—To pledge herself to obtain this government for M. de Mirvaux, and yet procure it for another!—nay, this very morning she repeated all her protestations to him before me!—What treachery!—However, I have promised to serve her once more in the present business, and, spite of scruples and repugnance, I will keep my word.—To what a state of embarrassment I am reduced!—I must act against my conscience, or betray the woman I have loved, and with whom, in the eyes of the world, I appear closely connected!—Ah, I am sensible that our virtue chiefly rests upon a happy choice of friends!—I hear somebody—it is madame de Bléville. Come, now let me dissemble.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

THE MARCHIONESS, BELINDA.

Bel. (*Advancing towards the Marchioness.*) THE Baroness is just gone out, but will return presently.

Mar. I am not sorry to find you alone: you have given me so many proofs of regard, madam, that my confidence in you daily strengthens; nevertheless, as you are the Baroness's intimate friend, I might reasonably suspect you of partiality; however, I am certain that your heart is good, and therefore cannot possibly apprehend your having any intention to deceive me.

Bel. Well, madam, you have already seen the Baroness twice; what is your opinion of her?

Mar. Why to me, she seemed very affected.—I plainly saw she was under restraint before me.—She found means, in half an hour's conversation, to utter ten sentences against hypocrisy and intrigue; boasting, an hundred times, of her own *frankness* and *simplicity* of *manners*, and taking every possible method to praise and flatter me.—I must own, I was extremely displeased by all this.

Bel. But do not judge of her from it. She knew that you were prejudiced against her; consequently, what is more natural than her being ill at ease in your company?

Mar. That species of embarrassment could only have produced coldness and reserve in a noble and ingenuous mind: it is not natural to overwhelm with praises and caresses, a person whom we think prejudiced against us: her end was deceit, but her

her means, in this instance, were deficient: without sensibility and integrity of heart, the head is often liable to make a false estimate.—Nevertheless, I will suspend my judgement: I know how weak it is to conclude hastily; besides, I am so deeply interested in gaining a perfect acquaintance with the Baroness's character!—You, madam, are aware of my tenderness for my daughter; to form her disposition has been my constant study: but she is only sixteen; and by marrying her so young, I must confess, it is the mother-in-law I shall choose for her, who will either spoil my work, or bring it to perfection. This consideration has more weight with me than any other; for ought I to resign my authority over my child to a woman whom I could not esteem?

Bel. No, certainly; however, you may depend upon it that she will receive none but the very best precepts from the Baroness.

Mar. Precepts, madam, without example, are of little value.

Bel. I see how much the Baroness's enemies have calumniated her to you.

Mar. She is called intriguing; and if the imputation be just, I certainly will not intrust her with my daughter: but I know how inconsiderately, how unjustly the world decides upon this point; nor am I ignorant that envy and malice almost constantly ascribe to intrigue, what is often the effect of merit, or good fortune; therefore, I repeat that I will divest my mind of every prejudice, and judge for myself.

Bel. The Baroness undoubtedly has an active disposition; she thinks nothing a trouble which promotes the interest of her friends, and, like all obliging

obliging perſons, is accuſed of intrigue by thoſe who do not know her.

Mar. How is it poſſible to blend a virtue ſo tranſcendent with a vice ſo hateful?—The wiſh to oblige ſprings from the moſt pleaſing and natural impulſe of a good heart, from beneficence, which ſeizes every occaſion to gratify itſelf. This pure and reſpectable ſentiment never miſleads; it will make us fearful, leſt by rendering a ſervice, we ſhould commit an injuſtice; nor will it ever produce the ſecret contrivances and baneful plots of intrigue, which, being always ſelfiſh, deaf to remorſe, and inſenſible to friendſhip, only acts from pride and intereſted motives.

Bel. What a picture!—Indeed—if I knew any perſons of an intriguing ſpirit, you would make me hate them.—But you ſay they feel no remorſe; I am ſorry for that; then, they go unpuniſhed?

Mar. Is not the privation of all thoſe delicious feelings which virtuous minds enjoy, a ſufficient puniſhment?—The moſt depraved of men owes his degeneracy to himſelf alone, becauſe he would not take the trouble to reſiſt his paſſions: before weakneſs rendered him their ſlave, he undoubtedly was ſenſible to gentle pity, tenderneſs, and ſome emotions of generoſity; and at that fatal period when he has reached the utmoſt pitch of wickedneſs, the remembrance of former innocence ſtill remains, and becomes his ſevere, but juſt puniſhment, by proving the exiſtence of that virtue to which he has been falſe, and of that happineſs which he has renounced.

Bel. With what pleaſure I liſten to you!—But who comes already to interrupt us?

Mar. It is my daughter.

SCENE VII.

THE MARCHIONESS, BELINDA, CAROLINE.

Car. MADAM—

Mar. Well?

Car. *(In a low voice.)* I much wish to speak with you.

Bel. I will not interrupt.—You dine here?

Mar. Yes.

Bel. The Baroness will certainly return; adieu; I will send you word when she comes.

[*Belinda goes out.*

SCENE VIII.

THE MARCHIONESS, CAROLINE.

Mar. WHAT have you to say, my dear?

Car. Madam, my uncle desired me to acquaint you that the government he wanted has been offered to him, provided he will relinquish the place which has been promised him for me. He says it would be in his power, some time hence, to make this government over to whomsoever you may choose for a son-in-law, and during the interim, he would give him all the emoluments; therefore, you are to determine, and immediately let my uncle know, by a letter, which you prefer.

Mar.

Mar. To offer the truck of a place for a government!—What is the meaning of all this intrigue?

Car. My uncle desires you to mention nothing of the matter, especially here.

Mar. I clearly perceive the reason of that. The Baroness has long promised my brother she would sollicit this appointment for him; and now he wishes to conceal from her, his application to another person. I disapprove of all this—such mysterious, underhand conduct is not like my brother—however, I find he prefers the government; his services fully justify his pretensions, and therefore, I shall advise him to accept it. But let us talk of a more important matter; of your marriage, my dear Caroline: the proposed alliance has many advantages in point of fortune; but I am especially anxious that the family into whose hands I resign all I hold most dear, may be worthy of receiving and adopting a girl like you; I wish you to find, in that family, virtuous examples, friends, and, above all, enlightened guides, who are, at your age, particularly needful. I have promised nothing, nor will I make any engagement without consulting you. This evening you will see the gentleman who offers himself; you will spend the day with his mother and sister; and as you have a just way of thinking, discernment, and a spotless mind, you are qualified to judge for yourself: examine the Baroness and her daughter attentively; remember, the former wishes to supply my place to you; and the latter, if you make this connexion, must be your companion, sister, and friend.

Car. Ah, madam, who can ever supply your place to me?—The mother-in-law, whom I re-

ceive from you, I ſhall certainly hold dear; ſhe may depend on my obedience, my attachment; ſtill, I can have but *one mother*, my faithful guide, my earlieſt friend, in ſhort, the author of my exiſtence; that ſacred name includes all others, nor ſhall I find a mother but in you, madam, in you alone.

Mar. This preference is juſt; it conſtitutes my happineſs, and I depend upon its continuance; however, your mother-in-law will have a right to claim your confidence and attachment; it is neceſſary that you ſhould be able to eſteem her, ſince it will be one of your duties to love her.—This choice, my dear, is equally important both to you and me—

Car. And as it depends on you, can I feel any inquietude? Your experience, madam, added to your tenderneſs for me, will enable you eaſily to diſcern the Baroneſs's character.

Mar. I will endeavour at it by every method in my power; and let me deſire you, Caroline, to converſe with Lauretta, whoſe principles I would have you try to diſcover, as far as poſſible; for I conſider this as one of the ſureſt criterions whereby to judge properly of the Baroneſs.

Car. My couſin is in the ſame convent with Lauretta, and has often mentioned her to me.

Mar. Well?

Car. She ſaid Lauretta had a moſt engaging tenderneſs for her brother, together with an excellent heart, the generoſity and goodneſs of which, ſhe proved by a variety of inſtances, which were really intereſting; in ſhort, my couſin told me, ſhe could only charge her with one fault, that of being too talkative.

Mar. 'Tis a ſad pity; for ſuch a fault may lead to ſo many vices!—Indiſcretion, bickerings, ſlander, and lyes, much leſs frequently proceed from actual wickedneſs, than from an immoderate love of chattering, and of always finding ſomething to ſay: beſides, this fault is equally abſurd and dangerous; nay, it ſtrips our ſex of every beauty, by deſtroying that appearance of reſerve, modeſty, and reflexion, which ſo well becomes a woman: and, indeed, it is as detrimental to the underſtanding as to the exteriour graces, for it bars the ſureſt avenue to knowledge, which youth can only gain by ſilence and obſervation. But we keep talking, and forget ourſelves.—I muſt write to your uncle before dinner. Let us go into the Baroneſs's dreſſing-room. Come, my dear.

[*They go out.*

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE the First.

CAROLINE, LAURETTA.

Lau. LET us ſtay here, my dear Caroline, and chat at our eaſe.—How happy am I to find this opportunity of converſing with you in private—and of being able to tell you how much I deſire your friendſhip!

Car. Believe me, you may obtain that without difficulty.

Lau. My mother enjoined me, this morning, to do every thing in my power to procure it; but the injunction was needleſs; I only follow the impulſe of my heart; I am not at all actuated by policy, I aſſure you.—However, *policy* is ſometimes requiſite, as my governeſs ſays when ſhe ſpeaks of my mother, who is continually quoted

quoted to me, as an example of addreſs and genius.—But let us return to what we were ſaying, I proteſt, I ſhall always love you; I am ſenſible of it.—Oh, that we had been educated together!—But, perhaps, you were not ſent to a convent?—No?—How fortunate! it is a great advantage never to leave one's mother, is it not?—Aye, you are perfectly right; I think as you do.—Come though, now let us talk about my brother; let us talk without reſerve; don't you agree to it?—You ſmile—how I love that anſwer!—Yes, that tells me enough; your frankneſs charms me; depend upon it, I will render myſelf worthy of your confidence; and ſince you open your heart to me, I will honeſtly confeſs that my brother conceals nothing from my knowledge; he is tranſported with his happineſs.—He has been in love with you above a year.—You are ſurprized; I very well know you have never ſeen him, but he has ſeen you.—On his way to Straſburg he paſſed by—the country ſeat where you ſpend your ſummers; is it not in Languedoc?—Yes.—Well then, he went a little out of his way to go near your houſe; he diſguiſed himſelf like a peaſant, ſaw you ſeveral times, thought you charming, and wrote me ſuch a letter about it!—Oh, the prettieſt letter!—I will ſhew it to you ſome day or other.—My brother is very amiable.—I hope he will pleaſe you.—There was a young lady at Straſburg, who much wiſhed to marry him; he told me ſo. She was beautiful as an angel; but her charms made no impreſſion on my brother, becauſe he was in love with you.—And—have your read Sir Charles Grandiſon?—Well, this ſtory is like that. Yes—the

poor

poor girl is gone mad like Clementina, and—has been three years in this unhappy ſtate.—Only ſee what you occaſion!—

Car. I own—

Lau. But tell me, when my brother enquires about your ſentiments, what anſwer ſhall I make?

Car. How?—

Lau. Nothing?—Oh, that would be too cruel! I will tell him you are touched by his conſtancy. You would not have me ſay ſo?—You ought to be more reſerved?—Your remark is very juſt. Well then, I will avoid being alone with him, that I may not yield to the temptation of repeating all the particulars of our diſcourſe.—And the wedding day is not yet fixed?—The more the pity!—would it were to-morrow!—*A propos*, I have already ordered my wedding gown, 'tis to be lilach and white—You don't admire lilach.—True enough, I am very brown, and it will not become me; you are right, I thank you for the hint. I will have another of blue and ſilver, made after the Engliſh faſhion, and drawn up in feſtoons, with frogs of foils.—Should not the petticoat be mixed?—with white ſattin, for inſtance?—Very well, I like it better too.—This advice is excellent; upon my word, you have great taſte, and—

Car. (*Looking at her watch.*) Pardon me, but it is four o'clock, and I am obliged to leave you—

Lau. What! ſo ſoon?

Car. I muſt return to my mother.

Lau. Well then, let us embrace. I am highly delighted with this converſation, which I ſhall never

never forget; though I will not take advantage of it; you may depend upon my discretion. Adieu, dear Caroline.

Car. (*Aside.*) Poor Lauretta!—How blameable is her mother, for having neglected to correct this odious fault!—

Lau. You were speaking to me, I believe?

Car. No.—Adieu!—I cannot stay any longer. (*Aside in going.*) She interests me, and I pity her, but I hope she will never be my sister.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE II.

LAURETTA, *alone.*

SHE appears softened.—I flatter myself I have gained her friendship; and it is but just, for I already love her sincerely; she is so gentle and obliging!—How agreeably she converses!—and how fortunate shall I be in having such a lovely sister-in-law! she will make my brother happy; and my brother is so dear to me!—Should any thing now prevent this marriage, I am sure I could never console myself for the disappointment.

SCENE

SCENE III.

THE BARONESS, LAURETTA.

Bar. LAURETTA—

Lau. Madam——

Bar. I was looking for you.——I have heard fine things of you.—How! do you invent ſtories, and tell lyes, even to me?

Lau. What, madam?

Bar. You pretended, this morning, that you were well acquainted with mademoiſelle de Bélville; nay, ſaid ſhe was your intimate friend; and then, you had only ſeen her once.

Lau. True, madam—but—I knew her by character—one of her couſins is at my convent.

Bar. Yes, I know it; otherwiſe, I ſhould have thought this another of your falſehoods; for liars loſe all claim to credit, even when they ſpeak the truth. Well though, did this couſin talk much about her?

Lau. Yes, madam; indeed, ſhe has ſhewn me ſeveral of her letters; and I have frequently given her little meſſages for Caroline; ſo that we keep up a kind of correſpondence with each other; therefore, I was not wrong in ſaying I knew her.

Bar. Still, at beſt, you have exaggerated extremely, which is a great fault; never repeat it, I deſire; for, if you do, you will not find me equally indulgent. However, you have juſt had a long converſation with mademoiſelle de Bléville; what did ſhe ſay to you?

Lau. Oh, mamma, it has delighted me!

Bar.

Bar. As how?

Lau. I will give you an account of our discourse—

Bar. Come, Lauretta, no embellishments—

Lau. Indeed, madam, I will not allow myself to exaggerate in the smallest degree. To begin, it was I who spoke first.

Bar. I do not doubt it; you are so immoderately fond of talking.

Lau. I made protestations of friendship, which she returned in the tendereſt manner: I cannot exactly repeat her words, I will not tell a lye, I have forgotten them; but I remember they quite enchanted me: then, I boasted of my brother, and she shewed that his praises were very agreeable to her; but, nevertheless, directly enjoined me not to let him know it; adding, that decorum restrained her from so early an avowal of her sentiments.—

Bar. She said this?—

Lau. Yes, madam, word for word.—

Bar. Take care, Lauretta, if you tell stories now, I never shall believe you while I live.

Lau. Mamma, I vow and protest I invent nothing.

Bar. Well, go on; how did you answer?

Lau. Stay, for I am so fearful of exaggerating.—Ah, I remember—I promised the utmost discretion—and at last, talked about the wedding day, and told her I should have a lilach gown; to which she answered, blue would become me better—

Bar. Did she enter into these particulars?

Lau. Quite freely, and advised me to have a blue dress made after the English fashion, trimmed

trimmed with two colours, and frogs of blue foils.

Bar. Of all things in the world, I wish this account to be true; but, Lauretta—

Lau. Upon my word of honour, mamma, I have not enlarged a tittle; and the better to prove my veracity in the present instance, I will confess that I am sometimes given to make trifling additions to what I relate; indeed, just this moment, when I was talking with Caroline, I invented a little story to set off my brother; but respecting all I have now told you, I protest, I do not think I have spoken falsely, or even exaggerated the least in the world. In short, ask mademoiselle de Bléville herself, and she will acknowledge it, I am confident.

Bar. Well, my dear, I believe what you say, and derive infinite pleasure from it. I now consider your brother's marriage as a certainty, for mademoiselle de Bléville can do any thing with her mother.

Lau. Oh, mamma, I forgot to tell you—but our conversation affected her so much, that at parting, she embraced me with tears in her eyes; I really believe she wished to conceal her emotion, for she went away very abruptly.

Bar. I hear Belinda's voice; leave us together, Lauretta. Madame de Bléville is to bring her daughter hither again at eight this evening for the interview—

Lau. You will let me know when she comes, madam?

Bar. Yes, certainly. Go, my dear.

Lau. (*Aside in going.*) I am pleased with myself now; for this time I have said nothing but the truth. [*She goes out.*

SCENE

SCENE IV.

THE BARONESS, BELINDA.

Bar. COME, my dear Belinda, come; I have a number of things to communicate which will give you pleasure. Now, I think you will no longer doubt the success of our scheme.

Bel. Has the Marchioness given you her word then?

Bar. No, not yet; but she gave me to understand that the decision should rest with her daughter; and I am certain mademoiselle de Bléville is anxious for the match; and even depends upon it.

Bel. But how can you know that with certainty?

Bar. From Lauretta, to whom mademoiselle de Bléville said so.

Bel. Lauretta seems to me a lovely girl; she has gentleness and sensibility, but she is very giddy; and I think I have caught her at making little alterations in what she relates.—She has such an itch for talking!

Bar. I admit it; and I just now reprimanded her sharply on that account; however, this once, I am confident she told me the strict truth: besides, she threw in circumstances so artless and natural, that I cannot retain a single doubt upon the subject. I likewise wished to tell you, that I have just received a note from madame de Saint-Alban, who informs me that our gentleman will certainly accept the government, because he has sent to desire she will admit him before the appointed

pointed hour, being, as he ſays, in great haſte to conclude the buſineſs.

Bel. Well then, it is ſettled by this time.

Bar. No; for madame de Saint-Alban was under a neceſſity of going out; and after the firſt appointment, ſhe made engagements which will prevent her returning till ſeven o'clock.

Bel. 'Tis five now; two hours hence, we ſhall know the name of the incognito, and he will hear yours.

Bar. The Marchioneſs comes at eight, when I ſhall be able to acquaint her that her daughter will have a place: it is all admirably well contrived. Acknowledge that I have managed this affair judiciouſly. I own, my vanity is truly gratified; it was piqued this morning by all your apprehenſions, and I am not ſorry to convince you that when determined, there is nothing I cannot find means to accompliſh. This lady, whom you repreſented to me, as ſo very formidable and penetrating, is actually quite commonplace—and with that coldneſs and ſolemnity of manner, ſhe is far from being inſenſible to praiſe; beſides, I aſſumed the character moſt likely to pleaſe her; and, believe me, ſhe is perſuaded that I am more worthy, conſiſtent, and unaffected, than any woman ſhe ever knew.

Bel. I hope no mortifying reverſe will occur to diſturb this intoxication of joy and ſelf-approbation.—But here comes Liſetta, who certainly has urgent buſineſs with you, ſhe appears ſo much agitated.

SCENE

SCENE V.

THE BARONESS, BELINDA, LISETTA.

Bar. WHAT do you want?

Lif. Alas, madam, I have bad news to communicate!

Bar. What is the matter?

Lif. Mademoiſelle Lauretta.—I am forced to acquaint you with it—has injured you ſadly in the opinion of Madame de Bléville.

Bar. How?

Lif. Madame de Bléville's woman, who is in your intereſt, has juſt been here to tell me of it. She overheard a converſation between her ladies, wherein mademoiſelle Caroline acquainted the Marchioneſs that mademoiſelle Lauretta had told her a thouſand lyes, talking inceſſantly while they were together, and not ſuffering her even to make one anſwer: in ſhort, mademoiſelle Caroline added that ſhe entertained the moſt diſagreeable and the beſt-founded prejudices againſt you, madam, and your family, owing to mademoiſelle Lauretta's ſtories and indiſcretions.

Bar. Call Lauretta.—I am quite wild—

Bel. Compoſe yourſelf—look, ſhe is here.—How haſtily ſhe comes.—What has ſhe to ſay?

SCENE

SCENE VI.

THE BARONESS, BELINDA, LAURETTA, LISETTA.

Lau. (*Quite out of breath.*) MAMMA—mamma—I have just made the most important discovery—

Bar. Hold your tongue. I have discovered that you are a monster of falsehood, and that you disgrace your family by the meanest, the most odious of vices.

Lau. Alas!—I spoke nothing but the truth when last you condescended to hear me; I declare, madam—

Bar. Avoid my sight; you fill me with horrour.—Mademoiselle de Bléville is exasperated against you; and all you told me about her, was one continued series of lyes.

Lau. Good heaven!—Could I tell lyes without knowing it? for I protest, madam—

Bar. Prepare to return to the convent directly.

Lau. Still, before I go, hear me, madam, I beseech you! I have the most essential information to give—

Bar. I wonder at your assurance; how dare you even to endure my looks?

Lau. Repentance and your displeasure overpower me; but I must speak—

Bar. Once more, I say, be silent; I command you not to utter another word.

Lau. (*Aside.*) What a punishment!

Bar.

Bar. Come, Belinda, let us see what measures can be taken.—Come. (*She goes out.*)

SCENE VII.

BELINDA, LAURETTA, LISETTA.

Lau. (*Detaining Belinda.*) OH, madam, for pity's sake, stay one moment!

Bel. I will not hear you, let me go—

Lau. My mother's interest—my brother's likewise—

Bel. Who, at your age, can give useful information?

Lau Chance has enabled me to discover—

Bel. You are young; subdue this infamous habit, and deplore its melancholy consequences.—I can say nothing further to you.

[*She attempts to go.*

Lau. (*Still detaining her.*) Madam,—madam!—hear me—

Bel. Positively, you are mad; Lisetta, disengage me from her, I intreat you.

Lis. (*Forcing Lauretta's hands from Belinda's gown.*) Forbear, mademoiselle; your head seems turned.

Lau. What violence!—Oh, madam—

Bel. Keep her there, Lisetta.—(*She goes out.*)

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

LAURETTA, LISETTA.

Lau. MADAM—ſhe has eſcaped from me.—How unfortunate am I!—Well, Liſetta, I have no hope left but in you—

Liſ. Come, mademoiſelle, for goodneſs ſake, no ſtories.

Lau. How, Liſetta, and will you likewiſe refuſe to hear me?

Liſ. Truly, mademoiſelle, though I am nothing but a lady's woman, I have no more taſte for lyes than madame Belinda.

Lau. I deſerve all theſe humiliations—but do not make me wholly deſperate, Liſetta: I am only fifteen, and have been badly educated; pity me, and reſt aſſured that I am for life reclaimed by this dreadful leſſon.

Liſ. What pleaſure I receive from ſuch language!

Lau. Then, hear me—

Liſ. So, ſo—you are falling into the old way again.

Lau. Good heaven! ſee my tears, behold my ſituation: can you ſuſpect me, at ſuch a moment, of wiſhing to invent a lye?

Liſ. Alas, mademoiſelle, in you, the habit is ſo rooted, that I am convinced you frequently tell lyes without knowing it.

Lau. Time paſſes on, and the intelligence I have to give will ſoon be uſeleſs.—Oh, Liſetta, if you are capable of any pity, once more allow me

to speak! Must I implore it on my knees? Well, nothing is too much, when done to promote my brother's interest. Lisetta, dear Lisetta, let me soften you! (*She falls on her knees.*)

Lis. (*Raising her.*) Mademoiselle, what are you doing? My mistress's daughter at my feet, intreating to be heard!—See, my dear young lady, see, to what a degree of humiliation some faults may lead us! I, on whom your confidence would confer so much honour if you behaved as you ought to do, must now be humbly intreated ere I resolve to hear you.—Excuse the observation, my only motive for making it is your good; for you have regained my respect by your penitence and tears: speak, mademoiselle, speak; you will find me attentive.

Lau. Alas!—the time is just at hand; we have not a moment to lose.—You know that my governess's daughter is madame de Saint-Alban's woman?

Lis. Yes.

Lau. Well, an hour ago she came hither to see her mother, but not finding her at home, asked for me, and told me her mistress had informed her, in confidence, that an affair which would make my brother's marriage certain, was to be concluded this evening at seven o'clock—

Lis. Pardon me, mademoiselle, but it is not very likely that this young woman should acquaint you with her mistress's secrets.

Lau. Why she knows me very well; she is always coming to see me at the convent. Besides, she thought to make herself of consequence in my opinion, by telling me a secret which, to her,

did not ſeem of much importance, as it will ceaſe to be one this very evening—

Liſ. But I muſt obſerve to you—

Lau. Interrupt me no more, I conjure you!—Then the girl ſaid that a gentleman of her miſtreſs's acquaintance had relinquiſhed a place for the ſake of a government, which my mother had procured for him: he is to come this evening, at ſeven o'clock, to madame de Saint-Alban's; he does not know my mother's name, and my mother is ignorant of his, and—

Liſ. Let me die, mademoiſelle, if I comprehend one word of all this ſtory.

Lau. Why, the gentleman is neither more nor leſs than M. de Mirvaux; ſuch was the girl's information. You may eaſily imagine that he will be in a fury the inſtant mamma is named, becauſe—

Liſ. Why, has not my lady promiſed a government to M. de Mirvaux? he will have one, therefore, what ſhould put him in a fury?

Lau. How! then you have not attended to me?

Liſ. I own, I was rather abſent.

Lau. Oh, heaven! what a trial!—my patience is quite exhauſted.—Go, Liſetta, I beſeech you, go and find my mother; only tell her this unknown man of madame de Saint-Alban's is M. de Mirvaux; let her inſtantly repair to madame de Saint-Alban, and intreat that ſhe will not mention her name; for this marriage of my brother's muſt otherwiſe be irretrievably broken off.—Go, dear Liſetta, I conjure you.

Liſ. My lady will receive me very ill.

Lau. But ſhe will hear you; tell her that—

Liſ. How? what am I to tell her? that M. de Mirvaux will have nothing more to do with the government?

Lau.

Lau. You torture me; positively you will kill me—

Lis. Look, here is madame Belinda; give her the commission; for really, mademoiselle, I should not know how to undertake it.

SCENE IX.

BELINDA, LAURETTA, LISETTA.

Bel. COME, dear Lauretta, I have obtained your pardon; your mother consents to see and embrace you.

Lau. Madam, I have spoken to Lisetta; suffer her to repeat—

Bel. What! are you going to begin again? Do learn to hold your tongue.

Lau. If I am not listened to, madam, the marriage treaty must be broken off—

Bel. Come, come; I am commissioned, by your mother, to impose absolute silence on your part; and if you say one word, one single word, I leave you.—Your lips have not once been opened since the morning, but to relate stories totally without foundation, and to tell lyes with an assurance actually beyond example; therefore, how can you expect to be credited, or even listened to for a moment?—Hold your tongue; pardon can be obtained on no other terms.—What tears!—What sobs!—Is keeping silence such a dreadful torment to you? I never saw the like.

Lau. (*Looking at her watch.*) 'Tis a quarter after seven!—Well, all is over; silence no

longer gives me pain. The information I would have communicated is uſeleſs now.—Oh, my dear brother, I had not power to ſerve you!

Bel. What does ſhe ſay?—But I hear the Baroneſs; come, Lauretta, come and meet her.

SCENE X.

THE BARONESS, BELINDA, LAURETTA, LISETTA.

Bar. OH, Belinda!—what a miſchance!—every thing is defeated.

Bel. How now?

Bar. By a note from madame de Saint-Alban, I am informed of the moſt unforeſeen event.—She mentioned my name to this incognito, who inſtantly got up in a rage, and left her.

Bel. But why?

Bar. You will ſoon know that: it was M. de Mirvaux himſelf.

Bel. How unfortunate!

Lau. Alas, mamma!—of this, I wanted to apprize you; I knew it.

Liſ. Yes, I muſt bear witneſs to the truth; mademoiſelle Lauretta told me of it—and I own, I heard her unwillingly, and refuſed to acquaint you with the particulars.

Bar. Did ſhe know it?

Lau. Yes, madame de Saint-Alban's woman told me; I knew how important the diſcovery was; but you would not hear me.

Bar.

Bar. Then feel the consequences of that odious vice by which you are enslaved: you could have given me the most useful information, and might have rendered an essential service to your brother, had you not been so thoroughly despised that nobody would condescend to believe you. In short, truth itself, from your lips, fails to persuade, or even to draw attention; and because it comes from you, is misconstrued and confounded with imposture.

Lau. Oh, madam, spare your unhappy child!—Oppressed, for the last two hours, by the deepest affliction, I have charged myself with every fault of which others can accuse me. Yes, I was addicted to an odious vice which fills me with horrour, and is now become my detestation: but deign, at least, to believe that if I had been earlier taught to know its dreadful consequences, if I had always enjoyed the happiness of living under my mother's eye, I should not, at this moment, have been cast off by her, odious to myself, and despised by all around me.—Oh, madam! you placed me at a distance from you.—Your ill fated daughter was, to you, unknown—then, do not drive me to desperation; do not overwhelm me by your scorn and hatred.—No, I am not contemptible, I feel that I am not—and if my repentance cannot excite pity, if my deep humiliation must still be aggravated—why—perhaps, I may then presume to retort, and complain of neglected education; ascribing to that cause alone, my faults and my misfortunes.

Bel. (*Aside.*) Dreadful reproach—and but too justly merited!

Bar. How now, dare you forget yourself to this degree?—Begone.

Lau. Oh, pardon me, madam!—I implore your compassion!

Bar. You are unworthy of it; begone, I say.—Lisetta, follow her.

Lau. (*In going.*) Alas, how much am I to be pitied! [*She goes out with Lisetta.*

SCENE XI. and last.

THE BARONESS, BELINDA.

Bel. REALLY, you treat her with too much severity.

Bar. I am not myself, I confess it.

Bel. This is a strange reverse indeed!—M. de Mirvaux was the unknown person; but he is not a friend of Madame de Saint-Alban's, neither has he a daughter.

Bar. In order to be less suspected, he desired madame de Saint-Alban to add these two circumstances, which really deceived me; and the place he had procured was for his niece.

Bel. That very identical mademoiselle de Bléville, for whom you wished to obtain it.—How extraordinary! (*A valet-de-chambre delivers a note to the Baroness.*)

Valet. From the Marchioness de Bléville, madam.

Bar. Very well. (*The valet-de-chambre goes out, the Baroness reads the note.*)

Bel. (*Aside.*) I can easily guess the contents of that note.

Bar. (*After having read it.*) I expected it. She absolves me from my promise, and absolutely breaks off the treaty.

Bel.

Bel. Ah, my dear Baroness, I foretold all this! you fall a victim to your own deceit.—What unavailing pains! what pernicious artifices!—In the most important transaction of your life, subtilty and double-dealing have defeated what rectitude alone would certainly have crowned with success: then open your eyes, and see that intrigue may prove its own destruction; while sincerity, both in publick and private concerns, is as advantageous as it is amiable: for the success of an intriguing spirit ever must be transient; and (supposing the advantages of both parties equal) the honest man, who is open in his proceedings and faithful to his word, will disconcert the arts of the intriguer, unveil his stratagems, and always triumph over him.

Bar. Yes—I have committed a great blunder. Before I suffered myself to be named, I ought to have discovered who this incognito was; of that omission I do repent.—However, it is needless to think of the affair any longer; I must now attend to this government, about which I have a multitude of indigested schemes.—I am going to madame de Saint-Alban—she has used me ill; I suspect treachery in the business.—Henceforward, I will trust to no one.——Things have taken a very unusual turn.—My eyes open by degrees.—Surely, you must have been guilty of some indiscretion—you shewed such a *violent attachment* to madame de Bléville!—Well, in time, I may, perhaps, be able to get to the bottom of this strange plot. One thing, at least, gives me pleasure, that you know I am not quite duped by it. Farewell! excuse my leaving you, but I absolutely must go out; neither can I defer it any longer. [*She goes out.*

Bel.

Bel. (*Alone.*) I remain confounded.—At laſt, ſhe has fully expoſed herſelf.—What mean, what deſpicable vanity! What a deceitful and ſuſpicious diſpoſition! The heart of a profeſſed intriguer is, indeed, a horrid thing! Diſguiſe, in ſuch characters, is policy; for who could view them as they really are without diſguſt and indignation?—Let me leave a houſe teeming with ſo many dark contrivances; a houſe, where the very air is loaded with artifice and lyes. Oh, let me leave it, never to return! [*She goes out.*

END of the SECOND VOLUME.

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